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**COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL**

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**Democracy Impacts for Central Asia  
October 1, 1997 – December 31, 2000**



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## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in November 1994, over 500 documented impacts have been compiled to illustrate the effect of Counterpart Consortium<sup>1</sup> services that are offered to NGOs through Counterpart International's USAID-funded initiatives.

NGO achievements speak for themselves as the best reflection of the success of Counterpart's innovative approach to NGO capacity building, which helps NGOs contribute to a democratic civil society in a sustainable way. Throughout the region, NGOs are increasing citizen participation in the social, political and economic systems that are slowly developing into a democratic civil society.

Our purpose in compiling this document is to publicize the strength and vibrancy of the NGO sector in Central Asia. Some of the included impacts focus on successful NGO efforts to advocate for policy changes and engage government in being more responsive to the needs of its constituents. Others highlight the value of improved service delivery in improving the visibility and acceptance of NGOs in society. Others still illustrate the enhanced institutional capacity that is necessary for sustainability of the sector.

A brief summary of the components of the various stages of this dynamic USAID-funded program can be found on page 1 of tabs 1 and 2, corresponding to the shift in approach implemented beginning April 1, 2000. For additional information, please refer to the Counterpart International website at <http://www.counterpart.org> or the Counterpart Consortium at <http://www.cango.net.kg> or contact us directly at the numbers on the back of this document.

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<sup>1</sup> Counterpart Consortium is the functioning name of Counterpart International's civil society and NGO support programs throughout Central Asia. This title represents the collaborative efforts of organizations working in partnership with Counterpart International. Previous and current partners include Aid to Artisans, Citizen's Network on Foreign Affairs, Goodwill Industries, and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

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# COUNTERPART CONSORTIUM PROGRAM OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGO DEVELOPMENT CENTRAL ASIA

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Building on the \$17 million, 5-year, USAID-funded Counterpart Consortium NGO Support Initiative, described on page 1 of tab 2, this \$10.8 million, 3-year, USAID-funded program, which began in April 2000, expands, strengthens and will localize support to civil society in Central Asia. This phase represents a major paradigm shift in Counterpart's activities in the region, evolving from direct service provision to the NGO community to intensive capacity building for a network of more than 20 Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs). This approach builds on Counterpart's support activities beyond NGOs to include a far broader constituency of other community stakeholders. Moreover, this shift redirects the program's focus to organizations that are active on a community level, where there is greater potential for high impact community mobilization activities.

Alongside of the expansion and localization of the NGO support network itself, there is a simultaneous expansion of the breadth and depth of services offered. The services ensure that the following elements of the strategic framework are met:

- Advocacy: CSSCs are providing communities with the skills to advocate for change, including educating the public, facilitating dialogue and channeling action into change.
- Social Partnership: CSSCs seek to institutionalize the legislative, attitudinal and organizational framework for long-term cooperation among NGOs, media, government and business.
- Community Mobilization: Through the CSSCs, NGOs are being given the tools to activate communities to take charge of their own problems and start working on solutions.
- Volunteerism: CSSCs are introducing volunteerism as a strategy for mobilizing local resources to address community problems and create public "space" for citizen participation and influence.



# **COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

## **KAZAKHSTAN**

### **Association of School Public Council Strengthens its Financial Sustainability**

As a result of the success and visibility of the campaign “Action Against Smoking Among Children and Teenagers”, The Association of School Public Councils was successful in getting \$10,000 from Philip Morris Kazakhstan to support ongoing activities related to the newspaper Trusteeship Council, a publication devoted to children’s rights and parents’ duties. With this funding the Association can cover publishing costs and has established relationships with members of the Association in 16 regions of Kazakhstan through which it distributes the newspaper. The Association’s success is a direct result of ongoing technical assistance from Counterpart, including training in fundraising skills and strategic planning. Q4/00.

### **Local NGO Fills Gap in Social Service Delivery to Orphans**

Current economic constraints prevent the government of Kazakhstan from being able to establish a children’s home for all orphans. Liliya Solovyeva, the Manager of the Astana-based NGO *Svetoch* appealed to Counterpart’s Astana Support Center for help in solving this problem. The Center arranged for representatives of *Svetoch* to participate in joint Counterpart and Soros Foundation/Kazakhstan trainings through the Street Children Program. Additionally, Counterpart staff identified a Peace Corps volunteer to help *Svetoch* design a project to secure property for the establishment of an orphanage. As the result of these activities *Svetoch* has been successful in attracting funds from Kazakhoil to open an orphanage, which currently houses 33 children. Q4/00.

### **Western and Eastern Kazakhstani NGOs Expand Services**

Until recent history, many areas of Kazakhstan have not had access to international agencies and services of local organizations. Areas most affected included western Kazakhstan and the Semipalatinsk region in eastern Kazakhstan – an area suffering as a result of years of nuclear tests. After participation in Counterpart trainings Western and Eastern Kazakhstani NGOs have gained the requisite skills for making developing strategic plans and fundraising strategies to enhance their marketability among the local and international donor community. As a result, these organizations have been successful in attracting over \$20,000 from various donors to implement the following programs:

- “Women’s Initiative Support” (Semipalatinsk) - \$1,200 from Power Engineering Institution (USA);
- “Organization of Juridical Services for Women of Semipalatinsk” - \$4,000 from American Juridical Bureau;
- “Cleanliness of Irtysh Bank” (Semipalatinsk) - \$2,000 from Global Ecology Fund (UNDP project);
- \$10,000 was given by ISAR through its Caspian program in Atyrau (Western Kazakhstan);
- \$3,500 was given by Eurasia Foundation under the framework of their “Development of Local Governing in Aktau” program. Q4/00.

### **Association of Unlawful Repressions' Victims Meets Community Need and Expands Activities**

Until now thousands of Kazakhstani citizens were unable to find information about their relatives who died during the time of political repression (1930 – 1950). The Association of Unlawful Repressions' Victims has collected information on the victims such as their names, rehabilitation locations, and burial places. In 1998 the organization received a grant from Counterpart to publish the first volume of a Victims Memory Book Retain Forever. Their successful implementation of this project allowed them to attract additional funding (\$6000) from the European Initiative on Human Rights and Democracy Development (TACIS) to publish a second volume and to organize an international conference for oppressed people. Q4/00.

### **Successful Development of the Student Organization.**

*Students in Free Entrepreneurship* had 6 members in 1996 and needed to be strengthened organizationally. Two of their activists attended Counterpart seminars on organizational development, financial sustainability and fundraising and began to transfer knowledge gained at these seminars to other students. This organization now has 60 members and branches in four universities in Almaty. One successful and income-generating activity of the organization is the creation and distribution, in collaboration with the business sector, of Valentine's Day cards in various universities and colleges of Almaty. The success of this project has allowed the organization to begin planning for their expansion of activity throughout Kazakhstan. Q4/00.

### **Kazakhstani Focus NGO Integrated into International Community**

One of the few non-commercial and non-governmental organizations of Kazakhstan that has been able to expand its activities to the international level is the National Consumer League of Kazakhstan. Through Counterpart-sponsored conferences, round tables and Counterpart training and technical support, the League has developed its skills in international partnership development. Recently it participated in the 16th International Congress and became the Central Asian representative of the organization Consumers International. Beginning in February 2001 the organization will participate in trainings provided by Consumers International to expand the technical expertise of the League. These activities support the development of the League as a local resource for information on consumer's rights for Central Asian consumer groups. Q4/00.

### **Women Help Police Stop Violence Against Women**

In early 1999 the Administrative Police Department established special units to prevent violence against women. These units are understaffed and not adequately trained. To address this, the Almaty-based women's crisis center Podrugi, a long-term target and grantee of Counterpart, initiated a meeting with the head of the Administrative Police Department. As a result, the *Program of Cooperation between the Center and the Administrative Police Department* was developed and launched in June 2000. Under this program, the Center will conduct training on the issue of violence against women for officers from six district-level police departments. Additionally, the Center will create training and procedure manuals for the police officers. This is the first successful example of cooperation between an Almaty NGO and the police department. Q4/00.

### **Public Hearings Promote Interaction**

For the first time public hearings were held in the Republic of Kazakhstan in November 2000. This event was the result of efforts and initiative of the Confederation of Non Governmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (CNOK), the majority of who are Counterpart grantees, partners and recipients of training in Social Partnership. This activity was conceived as a way to engage the community and government in a dialogue to discuss the difficult problems with Kazakhstan's society in a public forum and to work together to find ways to solve them. The first public hearing was scheduled for the VI Republican Day of Diabetes and focused on diabetic and other health issues. Participants in the discussion included representatives from health agencies, business, government and NGOs. As a result, the Ministry of Labor and Social Defense expressed their intent to enter into partnership with the *Diabetes Association of the Republic of Kazakhstan*. Q4/00.

### **New Organization Helps Mothers Address Family Health Needs**

**The initiative group Zhan Uya-2030 Maternity and Childhood Support Center was organized by an involved doctor in Astana to help families learn methods of self-diagnosis and treatment (biogenic methods) that can be administered with minimal costs. The hope was to provide more than 200 mothers and their families with an option for accessing medical services, as they are extremely expensive. After getting informational and training support from Counterpart's Support Center in Astana, the group has registered and is in the process of expanding its outreach within the community. With \$1300 in funding for the To the Top of Health Project more than 160 mothers have been taught basic skills for maintaining healthy lifestyles. As a result, the trained women formed the club Otau Zharygy as a wing of the NGO through which experiences and information can be shared. Additionally, the NGO now has 20 volunteers that work with them on a full-time basis. Q4/00.**

### **Counterpart Target Organizations Successfully Access Soros Funding to Expand Support**

As a result of ongoing technical assistance by Counterpart, three target NGOs in Kazakhstan have extended the range of their activities to include providing support services to other NGOs and initiative groups. As a result of this enhanced capacity, these target NGOs successfully received funding through the Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation competition "NGOs support NGOs" for the following projects:

- The consulting center "Zubr" received \$12,000 to provide consulting and educational support to NGOs working in East Kazakhstan.
- The association of lawyers "Legal initiative" received \$8,865 for the organization of support center consulting on legal issues for NGOs. This activity will be fulfilled together with Counterpart's affiliated partners.
- Kiwanis Club in Taraz received \$9,702 to develop opportunities for Taraz NGOs to do business. Q3/00

### **NGO Wins the Contest in the Web Design**

The NGO center *Kid's Time* successfully competed and beat out several large corporations for the "The Best Entertainment Site" in the "The Best Site of KITELE 2000" competition. The goal of this competition was to highlight and recognize companies working in the Kazakhstan market and using professional approaches to promote their activities through the Internet. The victory of *Kid's Time* was made possible through Counterpart's financial support of the project "Unified Information Area for Youth and Children." Under this project four seminars were conducted in Atyrau, Shymkent, Astana and Semipalatinsk to promote issues for children. *Kid's Time* decided to develop a web site to foster discussion among youth and children and about all aspects of youth's lives. Q3/00

### **Social Partnership Helps to Protect Social Vulnerable Groups**

About a year ago, as a result of Counterpart funded activities, the Association of Noncommercial Organizations *Invalids of Kazakhstan* was instrumental in establishing a coordination committee of NGO and government leaders from the Bostandyk Akimat of Almaty. The Coordination Committee has been represented by 40 members of public and religious organizations of the Bostandyk district under chairmanship of the Akim deputy. The Committee publishes a newsletter about its activities, which has been distributed among NGOs. Additionally, the Committee created a computer database to improve the quality of financial aid management to vulnerable social groups. As a result of this social partnership activity initiated by the Association, the database now includes 41,000 invalids and pensioners. Q3/00

### **Counterpart's Partner Obtained Sustainability for the Regional Housing Association**

At the beginning of this year the Department of Housing and Utility Services of Ust-Kamenogorsk acknowledged that the Regional Housing Association (RHA) established two years ago was not operating within state guidelines and objectives and it was clear that the organization had management problems. The Department appealed to the NGO *ZUBR* to help the RHA solve its problems. After carrying out an organizational development assessment, a General Assembly of the Association was convened where a new charter was approved and a new Executive Board was elected. As a result of *ZUBR*'s support and intervention, the membership base of the RHA is now 70%, up from 5%, despite the fact that only 20 cooperatives out of 47 (former members of the Association) have shown genuine interest in being members after reorganization process. *ZUBR* is now providing the RHA with meeting space so they can conduct meetings on a weekly basis – rather than the bi-monthly meeting schedule previously implemented. Counterpart has been providing on going consultations for *ZUBR* on different issues and has trained staff in a variety of topics, particularly Association Development, and has provided financial support through the small grant program to establish and develop this local Resource Center for NGOs. Q3/00

### **Government Attracts NGOs' Experience to Solve Youth Problems**

For the first time ever in Kazakhstan, NGOs are working with local government in a formal partnership for the *Regional Youth Program of Kostanai Oblast for 2000-2001*. NGOs were given an important role in the implementation of this program. In particular, two of Counterpart's target NGOs, *Alliance* and *Help*, are responsible for the administration of a contest, named for the Oblast Akim, to stimulate youth and children organizations and initiative groups. The total funding of this contest is 21M Tenge over three years. Other NGOs are working as members of the established Advisory Committee of this program under the Oblast Akim. Q3/00

### **NGO Protected Individual Rights of Astana Citizens**

Over the past few years, the Astana-based company, "Astanaenergосervice" used its position as a monopoly on utilities in the capital market to issue a collective contract for its services. As a result of such illegal actions, individual rights of utility consumers were ignored. The local NGO *Consumer's Advocate*, a grantee of Counterpart and training participant in the Counterpart *Advocacy* module, took their appeal to court. The resulting decision was that collective contracts on utility consumption should be abolished and, for the first time in Kazakhstan, the company will have to sign individual contracts with each of 350,000 consumers. Q3/00

### **Pokolenie's Successful Actions**

The Association *Pokolenie* is dedicated to defending the rights of pensioners in Kazakhstan. The first tangible result of their efforts came through the Counterpart-funded activity "Social protection of widows and aged women having many children and single mothers." Under this project heat gauges were installed in select apartments of a few apartment buildings (CAPs - Cooperative of Apartment Proprietors) in order to compare the actual consumption with the set tariffs. The result was that set rates were several times higher than actual consumption rates. These results were presented to the Almaty Akimat Antimonopoly Committee and the Almaty Power Consolidated Company. After a request from the Antimonopoly

Committee to reconsider the tariffs on heating, it was determined that the Almaty Power Consolidated Company illegally earned profits in excess of 69 million tenge from 1998-1999. This year the APC has started paying out compensations to apartment proprietors for the 1998-1999 years. Q3/00

### **Mothers Rally to Secure Education for their Children**

Prior to this quarter, partially deaf children in the Astana area were unable to access public education, as there was no school in Astana to support their special needs. In September a school was opened that is providing education to 15 children previously denied access to school. This success is a direct result of coordinated activity of an initiative group of mothers, the Astana Civil Society Support Center, and the Almaty-based Association of Disabled People of Kazakhstan NGO *Zhan*. After approaching staff at the Astana Center, the Center developed a strategy for the group of mothers that included education, training, and practical work with *Zhan*. The result was a legal registration of this initiative group as an NGO, which allowed it to more actively lobby interests of partially deaf children in the local Akimat. Q3/00

### **Baspana Helps Homeless**

Today more than one million homeless people are registered in Kazakhstan with about 120,000 of them in Almaty. *Baspana Association* reaches about 35,000 of these people through its program "Help Yourself." With support and training from Counterpart in topics such as *Constituency Development*, *NGO and Community*, *Community Outreach*, and *Project Design*, *Baspana* has been able to design projects that mobilize people living in bad social conditions and implement programs that help individuals solve their own problems resulting in the following outcomes:

- *Baspana* has built 339 apartment houses and building shops in *Shanyrak-2* and *Duman-1*.
- More than 300 families have gotten interest-free credit to build houses.
- With the financial support of international donors, *Baspana* has built a 2 km water conduit in *Altyn Besyk*. Q3/00

### **NGO Civil Society Support Centers Assist in Supporting Women's Initiatives**

An organization's ability to secure financial support for new initiatives is a key contributor to the success and sustainability of that organization. This is especially the case for newly-organized NGOs that often have their projects discarded by potential funders due to their lack the experience in developing and writing grant proposals. Through training and follow-up consultations in Program Design provided by Counterpart's Civil Society Support Centers, six established and ten newly-organized women's NGOs throughout Kazakhstan received funding through the US/Kazakhstan Women's Leadership Training Grant Program for NGOs. This program is a partnership project between the EcoCenter of Karaganda and the American organization, Center for Safe Energy. Q 2/00

### **The Association of Pension Funds Recognized as Key Player in Pension Reform**

Kazakhstan is the first country in the NIS to implement a comprehensive reform of the pension system. During the first two years of reform, 14 non-governmental pension funds were opened, 11 of which became members of the Association of Pension Funds. Regardless, because of their lack of knowledge of the new pension system, the reforms suffered from various pitfalls with the first new pension legislation having lots of drawbacks (unclear definitions of the role of pension system participants and inconsistency of the reform's steps). To address these challenges, Counterpart Consortium awarded the Association with a grant to establish a close working relationship between the NGO, Parliament and other parties. As a result of successful implementation of grant activities, the NGO is now recognized as one of the key players of pension reform. In addition, the Chairman of the Council of the Association of Pension Funds has now been recently included in two state structures: the Interdepartmental State Board for Implementation of Activities for Program Loans from the World Bank for Supporting of the Pension Reform; and the Working Group for Developing the Concept of the Future Development of the Pension System under the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan. Q 2/00

### **NGOs Have Equal Voice on National Commission for Children's Rights**

Kazakhstan has failed to provide a timely report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on Children's Rights that was ratified by Parliament in 1994. To address this, the Government of Kazakhstan organized a professional commission to prepare a report that addresses the seven-year period since its ratification. Members to this commission, include four leaders of NGOs working in the area of implementation and dissemination of the convention – with equal ranking to Parliament and Government representatives. Three of the NGOs – *League Ak Bota*, *Kids' Time Center*, and the *Information Research Center for Civic Education* –are Counterpart target organizations, that have both received and participated in Counterpart grants and trainings. Q 2/00

### **The Association of Libraries Develops Fundraising Skills of its Members**

The *Association of Libraries* of the Republic of Kazakhstan (ALRK) has been suffering from very low membership dues' payments. This is largely in part to vast state cuts in funding to ALRK member libraries in various regions of Kazakhstan. Compounding to the problem is ALRK's lack of appropriate fundraising techniques, thus further decreasing their ability to attract new sources of funding. In response, ALRK, funded by a Counterpart grant, developed a program, using Counterpart trainers, to increase knowledge and capacity of their staff in latest fundraising techniques. As a result, 26 local companies now provide the ALRK with financial assistance totaling over 400,000 tenge for purchases and updating of equipment. Examples include: the publishing house *Economics*- provided the Association with literature estimating \$410 in value; Chevron- sponsored the Association with a total of \$1,500; and USIS- assisted in publishing materials. Today, the ALRK is poised to enter the international market and identify partners abroad. Q 2/00

### **Legislative and Executive Authorities and NGO Sector Unite to Combat Ecological Crisis**

For the first time in Kazakhstan, representatives of two government authorities: the Legislative (the Committee for Ecology and Wildlife Management of the Majilis from the Kazakhstan Parliament) and the Executive (the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection) along with a working group of seven NGOs have signed an agreement of cooperation to address the increasing ecological crisis in Kazakhstan. This agreement was a result of international environmental policies and conventions that aimed to address problems of ecology and human health through public education, information, public participation in decision-making of ecological issues, implementation of programs, and improvement of the current legislation. Three of the seven organizations that signed the agreement are Counterpart's long-term partners and grantees: Belovodie (Leninogorsk), Kiwanis (Taraz), and Kaspiy Tabigaty (Atyrau). Q 2/00

### **NGO Leads Education on Labor Law**

As of January 1, 2000 a new labor law went into effect that introduced several changes in the relationship between employers and employees in Kazakhstan. Despite increased interests, the government made no attempts to educate people about it. The NGO *Legal Initiative* was the first in Almaty to offer a seminar on the law, in which the people could get the necessary information delivered in an understandable and comprehensive way. The seminar, funded by Counterpart Consortium- women's grant program was targeted primarily towards women's NGOs. It was highly successful and popular prompting several government institutions, including the Kazakhstan State National University to requested the seminar, covering all associated expenses. Q 2/00

### **Network of Civil Society Support Centers Contributes to Development of the Third Sector**

Counterpart Consortium's endeavor to support civic initiatives through a network of Civil Society Support Centers has shown significant results in the development of sustainability and capacity to not only the Resource Centers, but to also their principal clients - local NGOs. Over the last year and a half, the Centers assisted 27 new NGOs in obtaining registration and 42 NGOs to receive grants totaling \$140,000 (through consultations and training in Project Design, Strategic Planning and legal issues). Amongst the numerous achievements, the most successful Civil Society Support Centers included Astana Support Center, the Eco-Center of Karaganda and the Consulting Center *Zubr* (Ust-Kamenogorsk). Q 2/00

### **NGO Actively Addresses the Problem of Women's Unemployment**

The city of Uralsk, in Western Kazakhstan, was one of the largest defense industry towns under the Soviet system. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this town continues to face growing unemployment issues, particularly women's unemployment. The local NGO, *Union of Priuralye Women – Umit* developed a three-month training course for unemployed women. Upon completion of the course, participants received a certificate in small enterprise development. With funding from the Counterpart Women's Grant Program, the Union has successfully trained two groups of women, with 30 participants per group in January and April, with women from the first group already generating results: of the 30 women, 5 started their own businesses and 16 found a job within three months after completion of the course. These promising results have enabled the organization to win a tender announced by the local government and receive \$4200 to continue delivering training. Q 2/00

### **NGO's Access to Partner Increases its Ability to Detect Disabilities**

Science has proven that early intervention is key for the normal development of children with mental and physical disabilities, yet there has never been a tradition of preventative care in Kazakhstan. In response, funded by a Counterpart partnership grant, local NGO Center *SATR* in partnership with the Elwyn Institute of Philadelphia, was able to develop a unique early intervention program. The children referred to *SATR*, the program was highly effective in increasing the diagnose capture rate of the children (ages 0-3) with delays in development up from 8% in 1993 to 64% in 1998. Recently SATR started accepting applications for interns from organizations around the NIS, and continues to attract more attention of specialists. Q 2/00

## KYRGYZSTAN

### **NGO Issyk-Kul Sabaty Addresses Community-Based Needs through Fundraising**

NGO *Issyk-Kul Sabaty*, a 1.5-year-old non-profit organization, was looking for funding to address the issue of civil and environmental education in the Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyzstan. Through Counterpart trainings and participation in round tables conducted by the Issyk-Kul Civil Society Support Center the NGO members improved their fundraising skills as demonstrated by their ability to secure \$8,110 in grant support from different international agencies. With this funding the organization trained 3,180 people in environmental issues and innovative methods of education and conducted workshops and disseminated information on gender issues that helped breakdown stereotypes about the role of women in society. Q4/00.

### **El Onor Public Association Benefits From Membership in the Crafts Association**

Under the transition to the market economy artisans and art workers experience constraints in selling their art. In order to help them promote their creative endeavors and earn a living the *El Onor Public Association* opened an exhibition of fine arts dedicated to the 3000 anniversary of Osh city. Office equipment received by the Association through a grant from Counterpart was very instrumental in the development of multi-color catalogues, invitations, and promotional materials about the exhibits and participants. The exhibition brought in \$255 in revenue for the NGO. In addition, it was widely covered by local media, which generated interest among the general public for the unique and original attributes of the exhibited works. Q4/00.

### **Association of Disabled Children Utilizes Skills Towards Sustainability**

Two years ago the newly-formed *Association of the Balykchy City* united 43 disabled children, but had more than office space. With ongoing support and counseling from the Karakol CSSC, and with skills acquired in fundraising and project design through Counterpart trainings, NGO members have documented the following results:

- The NGO opened a small school where 20 developmentally disabled children have access to instruction in various subjects and are provided with hot lunches.
- With assistance from the Save the Children Foundation, 17 children with facial defects underwent surgeries for free.
- 14 children were provided with free physiotherapy and other health care services through support in the amount of \$1,500 from the German Technical Assistance Agency.
- The NGO purchased physiotherapy equipment in the amount of \$1,430 to treat cardiac diseases and open a physiotherapy department.
- In December 2000 the Korean Charitable Foundation *Friendship* donated new coats to 50 children and Adventist Development and Relief Agency donated humanitarian relief to 80 members of the Association. Q4/00.

### **NGO Altyn Oimok Improves Well-being of Rural Women by Making Them More Active**

In the village Bokombaevo in the Issyk-Kul region, the level of unemployment is very high, particularly among women. This high unemployment rate is a key contributor to divorce, poverty and migration of rural populations to cities. Through training and counseling support from Counterpart the NGO *Altyn Oimok*, a member of Central Asian Crafts Support Association, designed a project aimed at improving the standard of living of rural women through income-generating activities. As a result of the project:

- The NGO leader was awarded a diploma by the local administration for active participation in resolving the problems of rural women.
- From January through October 2000, the *Altyn Oimok* created jobs for 18 women artisans in the village of Bokombaevo; a local group of women artisans generated \$1,750 by selling crafts.
- With the local governing bodies the administration lead to the exemption for *Altyn Oimok* from paying local taxes for five years, until 2004. Q4/00.



### **NGO Aibek Leads Effort to Improves School Attendance**

In the remote Aksy area of Kyrgyzstan children had to wade across a river to get to school. Many experienced health problems or did not attend school as a result. By gaining skills and knowledge at Counterpart trainings, the leader of the NGO *Aibek* organized a meeting in the community, with participation of local governing bodies, to discuss this problem. As a result of this action 100 community members contributed construction materials worth \$700 and built a bridge for the children. Now 180 schoolchildren have increased access to attend school on a regular basis. Q4/00.

### **NGO Program Demonstrates its Success**

High school graduates and young people in rural areas often lack the business and economics knowledge to initiate their own income-generating activities. Through a \$8,850 grant from Counterpart the NGO *Junior Achievement* created a network of regional centers to train this younger generation in applied economics in the transition to market economy. As a result:

- *Junior Achievement* opened two centers in Chui and Jalal-Abad for 900 high school students and trained 100 teachers.
- Applied economics was introduced into the curriculum for grades 1 to 11 (Order #329/1 issued by the Ministry of Science, Culture and Education).
- *Junior Achievement* initiated many competitions – the winners of the first school campaign competition were invited to participate in the International Economics Camp, where three schools from Kyrgyzstan won prizes.
- Based on the results of the Bishkek competition in applied economics three high school graduates were admitted to the Bishkek Financial and Economics Academy without entrance exams. Q4/00.

### **NGO Yntymak Supports Health Service Delivery in Rural Area**

In the Chui Region of Kyrgyzstan there are 9,735 refugees including 4,851 children. Poor living conditions and nutrition are contributors to an increasing number of tuberculosis cases among the refugee population. The Chui regional tuberculosis hospital was unable to find funding to rehabilitate the facilities and as a result could not provide proper treatment to those in need. To address this need, the refugee NGO *Yntymak* (Mercy) facilitated a partnership whereby Counterpart provided counseling support and a UNHCR provided a \$3,074 grant. As a result, the administration of the regional hospital repaired the facilities and was able to provide long-term treatment to 41 adult and 16 pediatric patients inflicted with tuberculosis. In addition the hospital examined 389 people and has been taking care of a 5-member refugee family for a year providing them with a place for living, job and food for free. The cost of treatment and these examinations represents a contribution of \$6,057 from the regional hospital. Q4/00.

### **NGO Cholpon-Ata Shares Its Income with the Poorest**

Four unemployed refugee families in collaboration with 13 low-income families of the village Komsomol in Kyrgyzstan established the NGO *Cholpon-Ata* to assist in creating jobs for unemployed residents. Through technical assistance, counseling support and a small grant (\$ 2,450) from the Jalal-Abad Support Center the NGO members implemented a small farming project. As a result of the project they gathered 17 tons of grain and 2 tons of sunflower seeds. Seventeen low-income families of the village received an additional 200 kg of wheat per family that made up \$500. Portions of the crop were left to be sown next year. Q4/00.

### **NGO Leader Successfully Combats STD Incidence in Student Communities**

The incidence of STDs among young people has been constantly increasing in the Issyk-Kul region. In 1999 the number of infected people increased by 17%. By using skills acquired at Counterpart trainings the NGO *Leader* conducted a public information campaign on STD prevention. The action included 43 workshops for 1084 students in the city of Karakol. The project was carried out by 36 volunteers and was

supported by partners such as the Regional AIDS Center, the health department and international business companies, who provided promotional health materials, lab tests and equipment, anonymous services and \$933 in cash. The project concluded with a conference dedicated to the theme of teenage reproductive health, which was held for young people, parents, health workers, mass media and other stakeholders. As a result of this wide-scale campaign the incidence of STDs decreased by 32% according to the last monitoring surveys. Q4/00.

#### **Women's NGO Archa-Beshik Gets Fresh Water for Communities**

The *Archa-Beshik* residential area, established in 1994, is one of many Bishkek suburbs that never developed any social infrastructure or services for its residents, including water facilities. The residents use water facilities one kilometer away from their homes, contributing to health hazards such as frostbite in the winter months. By using the skills acquired at Counterpart trainings in fundraising and coalition building, the women's NGO *Archa-Beshik* received small grants of \$2000 from Soros Foundation and \$3,000 from the UNDP-funded "Life" project to address this issue. As a result of the NGO's active involvement to address this problem and close collaboration with the construction department of the mayor's office a two-kilometer pipe was built to connect the residential area with a neighboring village. Currently, 3,000 residents now have newly-gained access to this water system. Q4/00.

#### **Women's Congress of Kyrgyzstan Strengthens Legal Outreach in Countryside**

A high demand in raising legal awareness of the population urged the need to provide counseling services in the remote Batken region. Through skills acquired at Counterpart training workshops and round tables the leader of the NGO Women's Congress of Kyrgyzstan made some changes in a fundraising strategy, which allowed the NGO to get a \$15,000 grant from Soros Foundation. As a result of an efficient fundraising the NGO opened the Center of Legal Information in Batken supplied with modern office equipment and staffed with two lawyers who are experienced in civil, criminal, family and retirement issues. It was the third center established through the initiative of the Women's Congress. Q3/00

#### **NGO Leader Diversifies Funding Sources as Part of Sustainability Strategy**

The NGO *Leader* needed to raise additional resources to create a favorable environment for personal growth of young people and the development of the NGO community in the Issyk-Kul region. By using the skills acquired at Counterpart Consortium training workshops the NGO successfully received grant funding totaling \$35,047 from four donor organizations for projects over the next three years. As a result of funds raised the NGO accomplished the following:

- Established a club for teenagers "We Give Joy to People"
- Opened a summer camp for developmentally disabled children
- Opened the NGO Resource Center in the Issyk-Kul region
- Issue an information newsletter for 115 NGOs of the Issyk-Kul region
- Established Youth Legal and Information Support Center
- Established a Youth Rock Climbing Club
- Opened public legal centers Q3/00

#### **Association of Brokers and Dealers Introduces Ethic Code to Increase Rapport Among Customers**

To meet the needs of clients in a more efficient manner the members of the Association of Brokers and Dealers needed standards of professional ethics. By using the skills acquired at Counterpart workshops the Association drafted an Ethical Code consisting of five chapters, which was approved by the National Committee on Securities on March 2, 2000. The new Code gives the right to the National Committee to cancel licensees in case the Association members do not abide by the principles of the Ethical Code. As a result, the amount of securities sold quadrupled as compared with last year's figures and reached one million soms (more than \$20,000). Q3/00

### **ILIM Educational Complex Builds its Public Relations**

ILIM Educational Complex had little experience in public relations when it started implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schoolhouse project supported through a partnership grant from Counterpart Consortium. As a result of funding to support the inclusion of students from the School of Young Journalists, high school students participating in the project acquired excellent skills in writing press releases, articles and newsletters. The 12 teachers involved in the project received training in how to use e-mail and the Internet, greatly enhancing their ability to participate in this interactive project. This Counterpart support has enhanced 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schoolhouse's ability to promote its activities. At present, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schoolhouse members cover all their activities in press releases and have published two issues of a newsletter with a circulation of 160 copies that are distributed to mass media and the radio station Europe Plus. As a result of the competition for the best environment-related article held by the Soros Foundation 13 project participants were awarded a 1000-som award (\$25). In addition, the school designed a project logo and redesigned a web site ([www.ilim.kyrnet.kg](http://www.ilim.kyrnet.kg)), which won the third place in the city competition of web-sites. Q3/00

### **Protection of Rural Children's Rights**

Recreation of children during summer holidays was neglected especially in rural areas due to economic constraints in Kyrgyzstan. The leader of the NGO Protection of Rural Children's Rights visited an abandoned summer camp in the Jalal-Abad region and applied to the regional health department with an offer to rehabilitate the facilities. By using skills gained through Counterpart training workshops, the leader successfully negotiated with the oblast health department for support. In 1999 the NGO provided 150 children from low-income and refugee families with an opportunity to get rest at a summer camp. This year a trade union of health workers allocated 15000 soms (\$320) to the NGO for the rehabilitation of the camp. Since June 25, 2000 more than 50 children have spent their summer in the Medik camp in the picturesque Kyzyl-Unkur canon. The local administration provided the camp with additional support by donating 5700 kg of wheat. Q3/00

### **Central Asia Crafts Support Association (CACSA) Shares Successfully Expertise with Local Partner**

Through a grant from Counterpart Consortium the Bishkek-based NGO CACSA has developed a network of artisan NGOs and assists them in marketing, sales and coordination of joint activities. One such example is the Uzbekistan-based NGO the *Aral Golden Heritage*, which faced difficulties selling carpets produced by local craftsmen due to the low purchasing power of the population and the remoteness of the region. As a result of support gained through CACSA's communication network *Aral Golden Heritage* strengthened the financial sustainability of the organization through the sale of carpets totaling \$800 and a mechanism for receiving additional orders. Q3/00

### **Public Legal Association Civil Dignity Advocates Poor Rights**

The transition to a market economy has resulted in a high demand for legal services in Kyrgyzstan, which are not always accessible by low-income and disadvantaged citizens. Through a \$4,660 grant from Counterpart Consortium the Public Legal Association opened two Charitable Legal Centers located in different parts of Bishkek. In the first six months of operation they provided counseling services to 128 citizens for free (an estimated cost of \$780). The clientele of the Centers are mostly retired (96%) and low-income people (4%).

- In February 2000 an elderly couple applied to the Center because their house was gradually deteriorating under the pressure of a neighboring house. As a result of efficient actions undertaken by lawyers volunteering for the Center the court made the defendants reimburse \$10,000 to the family including court expenses.
- In March 2000 a disabled retired woman asked the Center's volunteers to help her with repayment of funds she loaned two years prior. Due to the efficient assistance of the volunteers, the court forced the borrower to pay \$3,650 (the full amount she loaned and reimbursement of court expenses). Q3/00

### **Clients Benefit from Afghanets NGO Activities**

In the Kerben village in Jalal-Abad, there are 19 families with veterans from the Afghan War that are experience serious difficulties finding jobs. Through ongoing counseling support and participation in Counterpart training workshops the members of the NGO Afghanets designed a grant project, which was awarded a \$1,170 grant by Mercy Corps International and a 2.5 hectare plot of land by the village administration. As a result of efficient fundraising efforts and collaboration with the donor and local governing bodies the NGO members and their families started a small project aimed at potato growing. The crop (estimated at \$1000) will be equally divided among the families. Also, to improve the environment in the Kerben village the NGO Afghanets conducted a community-based action to plant trees in the village. Using community mobilization techniques the NGO collected 500 saplings and planted them on a 1.5 hectare plot of land allocated to the NGO by the village administration. Q3/00

### **Association for Consumer Rights Protection "Aikyn" Advocates for Disadvantaged Students**

Due to the low level of awareness and insufficient knowledge of the law on consumer rights a great number of consumers in the Kyrgyz Republic are not able to efficiently defend their own rights. For example, 25 students were admitted to and paid for a college in Bishkek but had to quit when the college administration did not meet their obligations. The students could not get back the fees they paid for tuition. Counterpart grantee NGO *Aikyn* has opened three branch offices in universities and *Aikyn* members implement a program among college and university students that targets young consumers. All of the Association's activities are widely covered by the mass media. As a result of the involvement of *Aikyn* the students were reimbursed 100% of the tuition fees (45,000 soms - \$950). Q3/00

### **Aimira NGO Is Capable of Earning Income and Distributing it to Disadvantaged People**

There are 17 refugee families from Tajikistan in the Oktyabrsky village of the Jalal-Abad region. Many of them, as with local citizens, are unemployed and the standard of living is very low. Through training and counseling support from Counterpart Consortium and participation in round tables arranged by the Support Center, the leader of the refugee-focused NGO *Aimira* designed a small community-based project, which was approved by UNHCR in the amount of \$1,270. As a result of the project, the NGO members started a small agribusiness and grew 16 tons of wheat, which made up \$1,700. The crop was partially divided among 13 of the local and refugee families, members of the NGO, and 10 tons were left for planting next year. Q3/00

### **NGO Bakyt Promotes Grassroots Initiatives**

In the village Kurulush in the Jalal-Abad region, the public bath has not been operating for the last ten years, resulting in increased rates of skin diseases and contagious diseases among village citizens. The NGO *Bakyt* analyzed the problem and raised \$1,105, through partnership efforts at the community level and in cooperation with local governing bodies, to address this health need. The project was also awarded a \$1,050 grant by UNDP. Counterpart Consortium provided the NGO with technical assistance in the form of training and counseling services. For month and a half 12 NGO members were involved in the reconstruction of the public bath, which is currently operating and provides services to 300 local families. As a result, the sanitary and hygiene environment in the village has improved and there have been no incidence of skin or contagious diseases reported in the two months following the opening of the bathhouse. Q3/00

### **Fundraising to Increase Legal Awareness of Women**

In order to provide rural women with informational, legal and counseling support the *Talas* branch of the *Women's Support Center* needed to identify more resources. By using the skills acquired at the Project Design workshop at Counterpart, the NGO wrote a series of applications to donor organizations which resulted in nearly \$12,000 in grant funding that was used to open a computer training center in *Talas*, publish a book entitled "Women's Rights," and provide women with micro credits. Q 2/00

### **Kyrgyz NGO Opens a Door to Montana Partner**

In order to replicate and construct a training and teaching center for 200 developmentally disabled young people, the *Educational Center for Professional Training of Disabled Children* (ECPTDC) needed a partner organization. Through assistance from Counterpart Consortium and the Montana Army National Guard the NGO was partnered with the Farm-in-the Dell Foundation (Rural Opportunities Project). The leader of the Kyrgyz ECPTDC was invited to visit Montana at the expense of the US partner, which covered all travel and accommodation costs. As a result, the leader of the ECPTDC signed a 5-year partnership agreement with the US Foundation and received an initial \$5,000 contribution for construction of the Center in Kyrgyzstan. The Ministry of Emergencies in Kyrgyzstan contributed \$4,750 and the Mayor's Office allocated a 1.3-hectare plot of land for construction. The Montana National Guard continues to oversee the delivery of funds for the project, participates in the delivery of materials and supplies, and help transport volunteers from Montana to Kyrgyzstan. Q 2/00

### **NGO Increases Rural Women's Activeness Through Financial Sustainability**

In response to the growing demand for services related to women's rights and professional development for rural women, including training to preserve traditional crafts and develop new marketing skills, the NGO *Jez-Oimok* successfully leveraged funds in excess of \$20,000 from Soros, Mercy Corps, UNDP and UNHCR to purchase wool processing equipments and trained 74 women including 18 refugees. More than 40% of trained women were offered jobs in crafts making workshops. Some funding was used to open an affiliated training center in the village of Voznesenovka. The success of the projects resulted from the NGO's skills in program design, obtained through Counterpart training and consultations. Q 2/00

### **Association of Tax Consultants**

To improve financial sustainability and implement new projects, the *Association of Tax Consultants* sought new sources of funding, by using skills and knowledge acquired at Counterpart workshops, and achieved the following results:

- The Association applied to ARD/CHECCHI, a USAID-funded project, to carry out the project "Comments on the Tax Code of the Kyrgyz Republic." The Tax Code was designed by tax specialists and contained specific terminology without any case studies. Therefore the general public was denied access to it. With a \$14,280 grant the Association will be able to provide the taxpayers with a printed copy of comments on the Tax Code, which will present the Code in a more simple and accessible manner, using explanations and examples.
- The Association also received support from ARD/CHECCHI to implement a six-month televised project entitled "The Right to Create," which is aimed at developing tax awareness of citizens. The project will promote the dialogue and mutual understanding between tax inspectors and taxpayers. A \$960 grant will help the NGO develop materials for TV programs. Q 2/00

### **Advocacy of Human Rights in Remote Areas of Kyrgyzstan**

Advocacy of citizens' rights and interests is an integral part of the development of democratic society in Kyrgyzstan. The population in rural areas in the southern part of the country is most vulnerable because of their lack of access to information. They also do not have access to legal counseling services not could they afford to pay for the services if they were available. Through consultations and training at Counterpart Consortium, the leader and members of the Human Rights and Democracy Center received a \$25,000 grant from the Soros Foundation to service the high demand for legal consulting services to the low-income groups in the Osh region. As a result of this successful fundraising effort the Center is making considerable strides in advocating for human rights in the southern region of Kyrgyzstan. Q 2/00

### **Women's Congress Raises Additional Resources to Increase Legal Awareness of Regional Population**

In order to meet the growing demand for legal education in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, the *Women's Congress* needed to open two more Legal Information Center branches. Using skills and knowledge acquired through Counterpart trainings and consultations, the leader of the Women's Congress made efficient changes to the NGO's strategic plan to ensure its financial sustainability. The NGO successfully submitted an application to the Eurasia Foundation and was awarded a \$15,000 grant. As a result of the project the NGO opened two centers that are staffed with competent lawyers and equipped with modern office equipment. In the two months since its establishment, the Centers offered counseling services to 211 low-income people, organized a meeting for 500 women to inform them on their rights and disability allowances, and made two field visits to local colleges. All activities have been widely covered by mass media. Both Centers have established strong partnership relations with local governing bodies and governmental agencies. Q 2/00

### **NGO Addresses Community-Based Issues Through Fundraising**

To promote comprehensive development of rural children and to improve the social & economic status of orphans & children of low-income families, the NGO *Protection of Rural Children's Rights* sought additional funding. By using the skills acquired through Counterpart Consortium trainings and participation in roundtables, the NGO designed a series of grant applications to address issues such as children's health, education and social guarantees. The NGO received funding from the Asian Development Bank, Mercy Corps International, Soros Foundation, Swiss Foundation and ICDIVOCA in excess of \$40,000 to implement nine projects in collaboration with local and regional governing bodies. Q 2/00

### **Women's Support Center Expands the Network of Rural Women's NGOs**

The network of women's organizations in Naryn and Talas regions is underdeveloped. There are only four women's NGOs operating the Talas region. These few organizations are making an effective contribution to poverty alleviation, legal literacy and social protection of low-income groups of the population. Through training and counseling services at Counterpart Consortium, the *Women's Support Center*, a nonprofit organization, received a \$14,568 grant to build capacity and expand the network of women's NGOs in the Talas region. As a result of the project targeting rural women, two women's non-profit groups were established – Sheker and Ak-Totu. The latter initiated the opening of a maternity home in the village of Kok-Sai. A database on women working with micro credits was created for three regions. Q 2/00

### **NGO Financial Sustainability**

The *Students' Bar Association* needed financial resources to advocate for rights and interests of law college graduates. Through counseling support from Counterpart Consortium, the youth NGO designed several grant applications, which were submitted to donor organizations such as USIS, Global and UNHCR. Since May 1999 the Association has received nearly \$24,000 in grant funding to implement a series of projects and improve the NGO's financial sustainability. This group used money to conduct summer school courses in election law and debates in international law to train high schools students throughout the republic. In addition, the Association established a Refugee Social Assistance Center, which offers counseling services on refugee rights. Q 2/00

### **Union of Rural Women Successfully Utilizes Grant Solicitation Strategy**

In order to raise the awareness of rural women and involve them more actively in the development of civil society in Kyrgyzstan, the *Alga Union of Rural Women* needed more financial resources. By using skills acquired at training workshops and roundtables sponsored by Counterpart Consortium, the NGO submitted a series of grant applications to donor organizations that were aimed at providing comprehensive support to rural women including information, training and micro-crediting. As a result of successful fundraising the NGO implemented 11 projects totaling \$64,687 granted by UNDP, HIVOS, Soros Foundation, UNHCR and the Eurasia Foundation. As a result of the NGO's programs, nine refugee families in three villages built greenhouses. Q 2/00

### **Aikyn Promotes Nationwide Advocacy Campaign and Saves Consumers' Money**

Advocacy of consumers' rights and interests is a very important task in building and strengthening a democratic state based on the rule of law. The *Aikyn Association of Consumer Rights' Protection* is actively working in this direction. Through skills gained at Counterpart Consortium training workshops and counseling services *Aikyn* submitted applications to donors and was awarded grants by the Mercy Corps International and Soros Foundation. As a result of fundraising activities the Association implemented several projects totaling \$22,800. One of the most significant impacts from the NGO projects was the cancellation of fees for distribution of energy utilization rules to consumers totaling \$3,319,094. Q 2/00

### **NGO Advocates Refugee Right to Residence Permit**

In 12 villages of the Jaiyl region in Kyrgyzstan, 376 families of refugees and migrants from Tajikistan. 151 families do not have a residence permit and therefore not entitled to housing, jobs or health care services. On March 14, 2000 the NGO *Hirensa* initiated a meeting of refugees, migrants with representatives from the State Agency on Migration and Demography, deputy governor, department of interior affairs and village administrations. Counterpart Consortium provided consulting and logistics support for the meeting. As a result of the negotiations 12 families (52 people) have received residence permits. Q 2/00

### **NGO Integrates Rural Children in Educational Process**

In the village of Kaldyk in the Chui region the local elementary school building was deteriorating and unsuitable for conducting classes. The children in this village, many of whom migrated from Tajikistan and are ethnic Kyrgyz, were denied the opportunity to attend school. By using skills gained in Social Partnership workshops at Counterpart, *Hirensa* received a \$4,500 grant from a donor organization, \$1,600 from a local governing body and \$1,700 from the local education department to refurbish the school. As a result of this partnership a new heating system was installed and school classrooms were repaired. Now 36 refugee children are able to get elementary education. Q 2/00

### **Archa-Beshik Public Association of Women-Constructors Advocates for Children's Rights**

The population in the new residential area of Archa-Beshik has been steadily increasing, developing a need for additional educational facilities, including an elementary school. With skills developed in a number of Counterpart trainings and as a former Counterpart grantee, the *Archa-Beshik Association of Women Constructors* appealed to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Mayor's office. The latter allocated 20,000 soms (\$1,200) and the Ministry of Emergent Situations provided the group with pre-fabricated houses. The Mayor also paid salaries to the builders for five months. As a result of close collaboration between the NGO and governing bodies a new school was erected and the number of school students has increased from 250 to 500 over the last two years. Q 2/00

### **Altyn-Balallyk Disseminates Basic Fundraising Skills Towards Communities**

The continued economic depression in the Kyrgyz Republic is beginning to have a lasting affect on the ecological situation of the Republic. People in rural areas cannot afford to buy coal or firewood to heat their houses in winter thus prompting them to cut down the trees in forests. This deforestation has led to an increased number of mudslides, which are especially prevalent in the Ak-Sy rayon. By using skills acquired at Counterpart trainings, the NGO *Altyn-Balallyk* established a strong partnership relationship with the Swiss organization *Lesic*. With funding from *Lesic*, the NGO has planted 20 walnut, 100 apple, 100 poplar, and 100 plum trees and is providing ecological education for kindergarten children in Kerben. Further, the NGO has provided consultations to residents in Kerben (15 people) and Altyn-Balallyk (2 people) advising the best way to coordinate with *Lesic*. As a result of these consultations, these residents received a grant for 74,345 som to plant fruit trees on 5 hectares of land. Q 2/00

## TAJIKISTAN

### **Kurghan-teppa CSSC Assists International Organizations to Implement Projects**

OSCE has started to implement a project on supporting NGOs located in Khatlon Oblast, the most affected by the Civil War area. The Kurghan-teppa CSSC assisted OSCE in identifying 15 active NGOs in Khatlon oblast as a target group for this project. Also, with the support of Counterpart Consortium hub office, eight Dushanbe based strong NGOs were identified and recommended to OSCE for the experience exchange with their colleagues in Khatlon. Now OSCE is planning in cooperation with Kurghan-teppa CSSC conduct for those NGOs trainings, roundtables and discussions on the topics related to Leadership, Team Building and Management. Q4/00.

### **NANSMIT Promotes Establishment of a New Media Center**

Many journalists in Tajikistan lack essential knowledge and skills on journalism and there are only a few entities which provide services to journalists to improve their professional skills. Due to the joint project between the National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan (NANSMIT) and Swedish NGO CIMERA Network, 10 active independent Tajik journalists took part in a number of trainings in Tajikistan and third countries to develop their skills. As a result of this project, participants of these trainings established a Media Center to provide young journalists with various services to improve their professional skills. NANSMIT is Counterpart's target NGO under the NGO Development Program. Q4/00.

### **NGO Odamiyat Fosters Volunteerism in Communities**

NGO *Odamiyat*, a former grantee of Counterpart, has been working on the development of volunteerism in Tajikistan since 1997. The target group of the organization is elderly people in the capital city, Dushanbe. Over the years *Odamiyat* has developed five handbooks to encourage people to volunteer to work with the elderly population. *Odamiyat* recently trained an enthusiastic group of citizens in the Kofarnihon district on the topic Volunteerism. Due to the total lack of support from the Ministry of Social Welfare Services, elderly people in this district are not able to provide for themselves. The most vulnerable are those who are bedridden. As a result of *Odamiyat's* intervention, there are now 32 volunteer workers working in concert with the Social Welfare Service to improve the lives of 320 elderly indigent people. Q4/00.

### **Gender and Media Club Established to Promote Gender Issues in Tajikistan**

At present there are more than 30 NGOs in Tajikistan dealing with gender issues. Although they have conducted various events to address gender problems, their activities have not received much coverage in the local media, reflecting the media's lack of awareness of these issues. In response to this problem, Counterpart grantee *NANSMIT* (National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan) conducted several focus group meetings and round table discussions with both local and international NGOs on the topic to emphasize the importance of journalists' coverage of gender issues. This initiative resulted in the establishment of the **Gender and Media Club**, which is dedicated to sharing information, generating ideas on gender problems and solutions, expanding coverage of the issue, and promoting a better-informed public policy on gender issues. Q4/00.

### **The Union of Afghanistan War Veterans cooperates with the Government of Tajikistan to Maintain Public Order in Khujand in Nighttime.**

Due to the increase of crime in Khujand City in nighttime Union of Afghanistan War Veterans in cooperation with the local Government has established a Voluntary Patrolling Squad to maintain order in Khujand streets. The squad consists of 50 people and almost all of them are members of the Union of Afghanistan War Veterans. According to statistics, crimes in Khujand City significantly have been reduced since the Voluntary Patrolling Squad has existed. Q4/00.



### **NGO and Public TV Cooperate for Mutual Interests**

Because of lack of funds public television stations in Tajikistan are not able to purchase new modern equipment. NGO German Cultural Center located in Khujand has negotiated with a local public television station about showing a 30-minute program on German Culture produced by the NGO through this local television station. In exchange for airing this program the German Cultural Center assisted this public television station in obtaining broadcasting equipment donated by the German Embassy in Tajikistan. Q4/00.

### **New NGO Coalition on the Convention of Children's Rights Established**

As a result of Counterpart training and technical assistance in the association development and coalition building, a group of children-focused NGOs has combined their efforts to protect children's rights in Tajikistan. The Coalition on Children's Rights is made up of 5 NGO members – *Nasli Navras*, *Odamiyat*, *Open Door*, *Foundation of Assistance to Medical Establishments* and *Aurora*. One of the key activities to date has been the collaboration of the Coalition with UNICEF and Save the Children/UK to research problems facing Tajik children. The Coalition assembled these results in the report: "Implementation of the International Convention on Children's Rights in Tajikistan." Q4/00.

### **NANSMIT Builds New Partnerships**

NANSMIT (National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan) was established in early 1999 to assist local media to become more independent and sustainable. Since its existence the Association has implemented several projects to educate people on the basic principles of civil society and promote NGO movement in Tajikistan. Swiss Agency for Development invited National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan for partnership to implement Central Asia Media Support Project as well as OSCE/Tajikistan requested NANSMIT to facilitate a regional conference titled *Media of Central Asia: Today & Tomorrow*. That activity resulted in adding to the association three new members. Today it consists of 28 media organizations, which benefit more than 1000 people in total. Q4/00.

### **NGO Jahon Contributes in Improving the Quality of Militia Cadre in Tajikistan**

the issue of inadequacy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' employees was raised and openly discussed in the Conference titled: Militia Today: Problems of the Cadre's Selection and Training. The Conference, which was organized by NGO *Jahon* gathered high rank Militia officials (including First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs), other Government representatives and NGOs. Conference participants prepared a number of recommendations to improve the quality of the Militia Cadre, which were presented to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. One of the recommendations is to include to the training curriculum of all Militia entities throughout the country the module developed by *Jahon* on Human Rights in Accordance with International Human Rights Documents. Earlier *Jahon* had conducted those workshops for Militia officials in Khatlon Region with the grant from Counterpart Consortium. After the completion of the project Khatlon Oblast Department of Internal Affairs decided to include that workshop into its training plan in Khatlon. Q4/00.

### **NGO Creates a Database of Disabled People in Tajikistan**

Disabled people are among the most underserved and vulnerable people in the transition period in Tajikistan. Many humanitarian organizations trying to help disabled people have had little information about them. The NGO *Dulsuz* created a database of people with disabilities, which is updated regularly. The database includes information about 10,000 disabled people, and is used by both international and local organizations, including government entities like Ministry of Social Protection. So far 5,600 people have received assistance from humanitarian organizations due to the listings in the database. Q3/00

### **University Students Help Khojand NGOs as Volunteers**

There is a large need among Khojand NGOs for human resources staff and for people with English skills. They often cannot afford hiring such specialists. There are students from the English Language Department at Khojand University who would like to work for NGOs as volunteers to practice their English and to learn more about NGOs. In order to regulate this process, the Khojand CSSC Support Center has made an agreement with the English Language Department to facilitate placement of bright students who are interested in working as volunteers. So far ten students have been placed in six local organizations, including the Khojand Center. Q3/00

### **NGO Initiates Social Partnership to Create New Jobs.**

More than half of the population of Leninabad Oblast lives below the poverty line as a result of the poor employment opportunities available. The resulting unemployment particularly affects women, many of whom are single heads of families and are responsible for at least four children. Separately both governmental and non-governmental organizations have tried to address this problem, but their efforts have been scattered and have had very little impact. The local NGO *Women for Progress* initiated an effort to establish a group of NGOs, businesses and Government representatives to focus on the problem. The groups sought assistance from Counterpart Consortium in how to foster Social Partnerships. For several months they met and collaborated to address several local problems in and around Khojand and then established themselves as the Council on Social Partnerships that meets on a quarterly basis. In one successful project, implemented by the Government of Khojand and *Women for Progress*, the Government provided four hectares of irrigated land, a neighboring collective farm contributed a tractor and fuel to plow the land, and the NGO helped the local women organize a group to coordinate their farming and marketing efforts. As a result, 40 women head-of-household are self-employed in seasonal farm work. Q3/00

### **A Private Newspaper Works With A Local Ngo On Women's Issues**

Over the past few years partnerships between the third sector and the Government in Tajikistan have grown while cooperation with the business sector is still not active. The NGO *Hilola*, a recipient of Counterpart's services, in cooperation with the private newspaper *Oila* (Family) has successfully implemented the project "Legal Education of Women" funded by the Soros Foundation. Through this project *Oila* presented legal information on women's issues, which resulted in an increased readership over the life of the project. This tangible result has encouraged *Oila* to sponsor the project for an additional six months. Q3/00

### **NGO in Shahritus Assists Communities in Problem Solving**

UNHCR and UNOPS have assisted the population of the Shahritus District – the most conflict affected area of Tajikistan – by building three mills and two rice-cleaning constructions in five villages with a total population of 15,000 people. However, these people had no experience in managing such equipment themselves. Using skills gained through Counterpart training and targeted support, the local NGO *Chashma* has facilitated meetings of the community leaders in the five villages of the Shahritus District in order to help them solve this problem. As a result, committees of seven people in all five villages were selected to control the operation of these mills and rice cleaning machines. Q3/00

### **Open Asia Initiates a Program on Preventing Violence Against Women**

The Information and Analytical Center *Open Asia* conducted research on *Widows of War* in Tajikistan for the Soros Foundation. After the research was completed, *Open Asia* developed and implemented a program to prevent violence against women in Tajikistan, from February 1999 to April 2000. That project, funded by UNDP, included research, advocacy, conducting round-tables and other events on the issue in cooperation with high-level government authorities. As a result of that activity the taboo was taken off this subject especially in the official quarters. Moreover, a Presidential Decree on Improving Status of Women in Tajikistan was issued in December 1999 and emphasized strengthening measures on preventing violence against women. This project, including the funding support from Soros Foundation and UNDP, demonstrates the organizational strength and maturity of *Open Asia* as a result of targeted Counterpart support that included training in a variety of modules. Q3/00

### **NGO and Community Resolve Problems Together**

The Borikachar village of Nau district in Northern Tajikistan consists of 300 families but has only one source of domestic water – a canal, located 2.5 km. from the village. The poor quality of this water and lack of adequate treatment facilities for the water has resulted in high incidence of infectious diseases. Working under a contract with NOVIB-Holland, the local NGO *Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia (ASTI)* carried out a needs assessment that identified the poor water quality as the primary cause of the high rate of diseases. The NGO identified likely places for 10 wells and offered villagers 10 hand pumps. The wells were dug and the pumps were installed by members of the community as their contribution to the project. The pumps are providing pure and safe drinking water to 1,700 villagers. This successful community participation project has resulted in a 15% decrease in the rate of infectious diseases in the village during the first month after pumps were installed. This NGO received training and technical assistance from the Counterpart CSSC in Khojand that enabled it to develop the relationship with its donor and to mount a successful community participation project – its first project of this kind. Q3/00

### **Local NGO Engages People in Gorno Badakhshan to Solve Health Problems**

Nearly half of population of the remote Shughnan district in the Pamir Mountains suffers chronic anemia and other diseases because of nutritional deficits in their regular diets. This condition is not entirely due to environmental problems such as soil and crop deficiencies, indeed the plants and fruits in the area are rich in nutrients, but the harsh winters require that they be well preserved and stored in order to retain their nutrient value for human consumption. Supported by the AKF, NGO *Didor* implemented a micro project in Sokhcharv village of Shughnan that taught women from 55 families improved methods of preserving fruits and vegetables. Women were provided with glass jars, sealable lids and tools for the process. These women will teach other women of the village how to preserve fruits and vegetables. It is anticipated that by the end of the project all women of the village will be able to provide essential nutrients for themselves and their families – about 2,000 people – to prevent diseases. NGO *Didor* has received training and technical assistance from Counterpart through the Civil Society Support Center in Khorog. Q3/00

### **NGO Assists Orphaned Children in Hissar District**

According to Government statistics there are more than 2,000 orphaned children in the Hissor District of Tajikistan. Most of them do not attend school and spend most of their time in markets and streets. There have been very few assistance efforts targeting these orphans. After Counterpart Consortium conducted a training workshop on NGO and Community for NGOs in this area, NGO *Munis* decided to help the orphans. *Munis*' mission was to assist children in Hissor; they expanded their services by creating a center for the rehabilitation of 95 school aged orphans/street children. As a result of successful fundraising campaigns, the Government of Hissor District supported the project by giving an office (seven rooms) and 11.5 hectares of land for processing. German Agro Action assisted them with seeds, and there were other donations from private sources. Today the Center is providing 95 orphan children with housing, food, clothes, medical services, and basic literacy training. Q3/00

### **NGO Fights Successfully Against Malaria**

Many poor families in Nau and J. Rasulov districts in the Fergana Valley of Tajikistan work in rice farming. It brings people some disposable income but also contributes to the proliferation of mosquitoes – including those that carry infectious diseases, like malaria. The NGO *Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia (ASTI)* conducted research on the issue and under a contract with NOVIB-Holland conducted experiments using the ecologically safe control method of breeding small fish and placing them in the rice paddies to eat the mosquito larvae. The experiment was successful so they showed the villagers how to breed and use the fish themselves. This NGO's efforts this past summer resulted in a 40% reduction of malaria cases. ASTI has received training and technical assistance from Counterpart Consortium and is a target NGO of the new NGO Development Program. Q3/00

### **NGO in Khojand Addresses the Drug Addiction Issue in the Region**

The issue of drugs has become one of the most alarming problems in Fergana Valley. Drug addicts, especially youth, do not realize the dangers associated with this disease and refuse to undergo treatment. The newly formed organization *No to Drugs* has prepared two excellent anti-drug Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for television that show the true consequences of drug addiction. With assistance from the Khojand Civil Society Support Center, both the Leninabad regional state TV and independent TV station "SM-1" aired the PSAs free of charge for two months as their contribution to address this problem. In the month after the first PSA aired, over 35 drug addicts – more than three times the normal number of clients – applied to the NGO *No to Drugs* for help. The clients received consultations from the NGO and were referred to the Khojand narco-hospital for treatment. Q 2/00

### **A Successful Civic Education Campaign Among Women Brings New Volunteers**

Counterpart target NGO, *Parastor* had a number of small projects promoting the role of women in society, which were ready to be implemented in the Oktyabrsky District of Dushanbe City. The NGO, however, lacked sufficient membership to accomplish these projects. To increase membership, *Parastor* conducted a series of workshops on Civil Society for 450 women in 6 mahallas in the District. The workshops included such topics as Women's Rights and NGO & Community. Other activities such as discussions and meetings with women NGO leaders were held. As a result of the campaign 50 women from those communities are now actively involved in *Parastor's* activities and are contributing to the NGO's projects as volunteers. This increase in membership has allowed *Parastor* to reach three times the number of beneficiaries then served previously. Q 2/00

### **"Fourth Power" Involves State Media to NGO Issues**

Tajikistan, like other Central Asian countries, has faced the problem of attracting media coverage to NGO issues. While Independent TV stations do cover NGO activities, state TV ignores them or asks for monetary compensation in exchange for coverage. Supported by the Soros Foundation, the NGO "*Fourth Power*" conducted several seminars and roundtables for media leaders in the Leninabad region. The Khojand Civil Society Support Center was actively involved in the establishment of *Fourth Power* and regularly provides a variety of assistance. As a result, the Leninabad-region State TV (LTV) and the Khojand Center (the NGO representative for the area) signed an agreement to expand TV coverage of NGO activity. Today, one million people in the Leninabad region are regularly informed about NGO activity through a monthly 40 minute TV program that is prepared and aired by LTV in association with the Khojand Center. Q 2/00

### **Counterpart Training Promotes Organization Development**

Not until NGO *Umed*, located in Kurghon-teppa, began its activities, the community was unaware of Childhood Cerebral Paralysis. The Regional Health Department was unresponsive to the needs of children with cerebral paralysis, and there were few resources available to NGOs such as this. After attending training courses conducted by Counterpart, the staff of the NGO was inspired with optimism. New ways of thinking and planning resulted in the establishment of a Rehabilitation Center for Paralyzed Children. Direct mission activities started. The group implemented a fundraising campaign that exceeded all expectations. The group discovered that their services were in high demand in the district. The initial stages of work included identification of 10,600 paralyzed children; 85 were registered for rehabilitation, including 25 children who had already been rehabilitated with good medical results. The local power now supports the NGO and has allocated 5 hectares of irrigated land to the NGO for its economic sustainability. The NGO *Umed* has also been recognized by a number of international organizations operating in Tajikistan, which provide the NGO with materials and humanitarian aid support. The future plans of the organization involve renovating and operating a bakery to generate income, as well as providing fee-for-service medical care for non-target groups of the population. Q 2/00

### **NGO Madina Receives the First Social Order from the Government**

The number of drug addicts in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) of Tajikistan has increased four times over the last 8 years. Two contributing factors to the rise in drug addiction are the proximity of the oblast to the drug trafficking route from Afghanistan and the high level of unemployment, especially among young people. To attract the attention of local authorities and the community to this problem, NGO *Madina* conducted a youth festival entitled "We are Against Drugs – the World is Against Drugs," which was attended by the Governor and other high level officials as well as covered by local media. The festival was such a success that the Governor allocated US\$5,000 for NGO *Madina* to implement a project on the prevention of drug addiction. *Madina* is going to use these resources to repair and equip 18 sports grounds for youth in Khorog city and conduct a series of workshops and other activities on drug awareness for more than 2000 at-risk youth and teenagers. This is the first NGO initiative in GBAO to be requested and sponsored by the local government. Q 2/00

### **NGO Leader in GBAO Represents NGOs in Government Meetings**

Due to the lack of true information and understanding about NGOs, government officials in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) seem to have a general mistrust of NGOs. With the support from Counterpart Consortium the NGO *Kalam* established an NGO Support Center in Khorog in January 1999. Twenty-seven new NGOs have been registered in GBAO and are dealing with a variety of social problems such as: drug addiction, income generation, women's issues, and assistance to vulnerable people. With the expansion of NGO activities to an estimated 6,000 beneficiaries, there has been a shift in attitude by the government leadership. Further, the leader of the NGO Support Center is now a regular participant in weekly local government meetings. Q 2/00

### **NGOs Promote Community Mobilization in Zarafshan Valley**

Zarafshan Valley, with a population of 90,000, faces many challenges that prevent effective community mobilization. Its specific geographical location and transportation problems leave it isolated from other parts of Tajikistan for nearly five months of every year and there are few NGOs. Counterpart Consortium assisted the NGO *East Women Ecological Association* in establishing an NGO Information and Consulting Center in Panjakent City. The Center conducted a series of workshops on NGO Management for activists and community leaders and provided consultations to them. Since 1997 more than 20 new NGOs have been established as a result of the Center's activity. These NGOs are actively involving communities in solving their problems. For example, the Tajikistan Social Investment Fund (TASIF) funded the installation of two water pipelines in the villages of Shashkat and Maikatta as a result of the community cooperation and organizational skills of these trained NGOs. Q 2/00

### **NGO leaders lobby for rights in decision-Making Process on Gender Issues in Tajikistan**

A task force on gender issues was established at a recent conference on gender issues which took place in Dushanbe with the support of Swiss Development Agency. The main activities of the task force are act as: an advocacy and lobbying mechanism; an “interface” between the government, NGOs and international organizations; and as a forum for the coordination of gender issues and programs in the country as well as advise on gender policies. At the conference, strategies for fulfilling these tasks were developed. The governmental representative, Bureau of “Women in Development,” proposed it to be integrated into the official government structure – a national committee under the Prime Minister, the President’s Administration or sector coordination bodies under the concerned ministries. The majority of participants, primarily NGO representatives, rejected that proposal as having the risk of being too “directive” and suggested the task force be independent from the government. Following heated and challenging discussions, it was decided to establish an independent coordination agency that would comprise the representatives of local NGOs, international NGOs and Governmental structures. There were 86 NGO representatives at the Conference, most of whom being assisted by Counterpart Consortium. Q 2/00

### **NGO Mobilizes the Community to Reconstruct the School.**

Many social sector establishments, especially in rural areas, have few if any resources for maintenance and repair. This is due to lack of funds in local government budgets. The NGO *Didor* conducted a number of meetings in Sokhcharv village (population 1,500) in order to mobilize community efforts and resources to rehabilitate the village school. The group realized that the existing available resources were not enough. Through the Khorog Civil Society Support Center they learned of support available though TASIF, which helped them with project funding. The community contributed 20% of the cost of the project and 20 members of the community are working on volunteer basis. They anticipate completion of the reconstruction by the beginning of the new study year. *Didor* has participated in a number of Counterpart’s training through the Khorog Center and the knowledge gained from Counterpart helped them conduct a successful community mobilization campaign and design a good project. Q 2/00

## TURKMENISTAN

### **Local NGO Promotes Third Sector in Balkan Region**

Two years ago in Turkmenbashi city of Balkan Oblast there were only two known NGOs – one working with disabled and the other focusing on ecology. Since then, the *Ymut Center of Turkmenbashi City* has expanded its mission to include the promotion of initiative groups in the Balkan region, leading to the formation of at least seven new groups since 1998. Building on technical assistance provided by Counterpart, the Center has become the first Turkmen NGO to organize a national conference entitled: “NGOs in Turkmenbashi City and their Role in Democratic Civil Society.” NGOs and initiatives groups, international organizations, businesses and local government structures jointly spoke about the role of civil society organizations and presented examples of social partnership in the Balkan region. This event reflects increased capacity building of the NGO organizer. Conference highlights include:

- 18 NGOs reported that they gained experience in fundraising from Counterpart, which contributed to their joint fundraising of approximately \$15,000 over the last year.
- Three Counterpart Contract Trainers volunteered their time (\$60) to facilitate the Conference, reflecting an advanced appreciation for collaborative activities to strengthen the sector.
- The Deputy Hakim in Charge of Social Welfare said that it is “very important for government to work with NGOs as they assist in the provision of social services to the disabled and retired people, relieving some of the pressure from government to satisfy the demand for services.” Q4/00.

### **Mobilizing Local Resources to Expand Opportunities to Beneficiaries**

The NGO *Family, Mercy and Health* learned through their own experience that it is very difficult to attract sponsors to finance long-term programs. NGO members who have worked with Counterpart indicated they have learned that it is necessary to develop resources beyond project-specific funding in order to enhance organizational sustainability. In September, the NGO launched a vocational training/fee-for-service program for orphans or children from vulnerable families. At the end of a three-month period, 40 girls and 60 boys were developing skills in woodworking and sewing. Currently, hand-made items prepared during classes are sold by the NGO and the profit is spent on materials for the workshops. Total input to organization was 8,425,000 manats (\$1,589) over two-months. Highlights include:

- In two months, the workshop products have earned 625,000 manats (\$117)
- The classes are lead by five specialists who have worked on a voluntary basis for the past two months resulting in an in-kind contribution of 4 million manats (\$754).
- Over the two-month program, seven former volunteers and beneficiaries have become full-fledged members of the NGO.
- As a sign of organizational unity, NGO members and volunteers from the student groups voluntarily repaired all of the old furniture in the NGO’s office saving the NGO \$566.
- Members and volunteers renovated two of the NGO’s offices, saving 800,000 manats (\$151).
- Total input to organization was 8,425,000 manats (\$1589) over two-months. Q4/00.

### **Volunteer-base Improves NGO Outputs**

Volunteerism strategies are rarely used by Turkmen NGOs, especially those in remote areas. For the past year, the NGO *Triera*, a Counterpart grantee, has been implementing a project to establish an information center for people with hemophilia and hematological diseases. With only a few permanent staff members, *Triera's* leadership was not satisfied with their ability to provide services to a large enough percentage of office visitors. Through consultations provided by Dashoguz Civil Society Support Center over a 5-month span, members of *Triera* built skills to recruit volunteers. As a result, there are nine permanent volunteers contributing time and resources to the NGO. These volunteers are engaged in the following activities to support *Triera*: preparing for meetings and round tables; translating, copying and distributing informational materials; attracting new members and identifying beneficiaries through community outreach; contributing to the NGOs newsletter, "Pulse"; and recruiting donors for blood transfusions and blood banks. As a result, the quantity of services provided by *Triera* has doubled since their project began in November of 1999. Q4/00.

### **NGOs Initiate Social Partnerships and Share Experience**

Though the third sector is young, Turkmen NGOs are gaining experience in incorporating relationships with government officials and institutions into their programmatic activities in the form of Social Partnerships. Among the NGOs with experience and skills forging such activities is Counterpart grantee *Cheshme*. In order to achieve their project objectives regarding the reintroduction of eco-education in schools, the first goal was to expand and strengthen the linkages and relationships with governmental organizations. Project objectives required permission for joint activities between 5 schools, the Department of National Education (GORONO), the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment. One the best examples of the project's successes is the joint drafting of a 9 month work plan of ecological activities for schools, completed by GORONO and *Cheshme*. In the workplan, it was agreed by the national government that the NGO and selected teachers would conduct six eco-educational measures – contests, lessons, seminars, and actions – in 50 schools. Thus, the NGO's project was expanded from 5 schools to 50 as a result of positive relationships with local government. Currently, there is no ecological curriculum in the primary and secondary school system, making the result of this social partnership one of the only examples of ecological curriculum at this level. Q4/00.

### **NGOS TEAM-UP WITH EXXON-MOBIL TO ASSIST SCHOOLS**

The insufficient degree of interaction between parents, teachers and children, and the lack of material resources in some schools and kindergartens inhibits innovative and interactive teaching activities. Counterpart Consortium in partnership with Exxon Mobil developed three projects in Ashgabad and Balkanabat cities to benefit child development and provide material resources to schools. Seven local NGOs were sub-contracted on the projects, to organize and facilitate periodic meetings with parents, teachers, and students from each school. As a result, each school formed a steering committee to oversee the development of supply requests and to take responsibility for the installation and monitoring of equipment use. After only one and a half months of work:

- 7 NGOs have improved their outreach to targeted communities and have increased their Constituencies.
- The sub-contracting fees on the project generated over \$100 in fees for 7 NGOs.
- \$33,000 in equipment and goods was presented to 14 schools, orphanages and kindergartens.
- Project Steering Committees evolved into Parent/Teacher Committees to work on other activities in 9 of the target schools.
- The Directors of five of the schools stated that without the involvement of the NGOs and the discussion generated by the steering committees, the choice of equipment would not have accurately reflected the real needs and there would have been no system for monitoring the use of the equipment.
- The equipment contributed to the effective development of over 1411 children in schools and orphanages in Ashgabat and Bakkanabat. Q4/00.



### **Together to Development**

There are approximately only 50 ecology NGOs active in Turkmenistan, the majority of which are in the capital city. These NGOs have identified the lack of interaction and coordination within their sector as a major constraint to the development of eco-NGOs. They noted cooperation with NGOs located in the regions as a particular problem. As a result of Counterpart training in Association Development and Project Design, as well as participation in meetings facilitated by Counterpart, 13 ecological NGOs joined forces in February 2000 to create the *Commonwealth of Ecological Noncommercial Organizations*. Using the Counterpart project design model, the Commonwealth received a grant from the Democracy Fund to open an information center and information clearinghouse for members of ecological organizations. As a result:

- More than 250 NGO members have received consultations and information on the third sector, legislation and ecology.
- 15 NGOs have received literature for their offices
- 6 NGOs have received consultations on ecological project design.
- Membership has doubled from February to December of 2000 to 30 member organizations. Q4/00.

### **Local Archin Joins the Ranks**

Although only 12% of the population of Turkmenbashi etrap gets its drinking water through the Water Users' Association (WUA) Project, local authorities and communities are quickly recognizing the utility of the association's activities to secure a safe supply of drinking water. Recently the Archin (Deputy Farm Chief) of one of the largest collective farms in the area called the WUA Project office repeatedly asking that a representative come and explain the purpose of the organization. Since then the WUA staff has held several community meetings in that village and residents are well on their way to successfully building a community serdop and receiving drinking water. This result is significant because:

- The Deputy Archin has stated that working through the WUA is the only realistic way of getting drinking water to the village;
- The Deputy Archin's call was in response to continued pressure by the village residents to explain why they were not receiving drinking water like other neighboring villages;
- The Deputy Archin himself sought out members of a nearby water committee to learn how they solved their drinking water problem and to get contact information about WUA; and
- After opening the first village meeting with WUA staff, the Deputy Archin then sat in the audience as a local resident raising his hand to ask questions, listening to local residents' concerns and allowing an open community decision making process to take hold. Q4/00.

### **NGO Promotes Innovative Farming Development**

The transition to a market economy in Turkmenistan is characterized by the need for new approaches to agricultural development. Turkmenistan's topography and environmental factors have lead to difficulties with crops such as field erosion and insufficient water. The initiative group *Farmer's Eco-School* has implemented a public education program for farmers in the framework of its grant. Two members of the organization were also certified as trainers, and have already begun to effectively practice their facilitation skills with their beneficiaries through the following types of activities:

- By holding 9 meetings with 200 people, the initiative group was able to activate the local farming collectives to jointly discuss their problems and share resources to resolve three agricultural-related disputes.
- After discussing materials distributed by the *Club*, 17 families decided to switch to new agro-technical and biologically safe methods of combating agricultural pests instead of expensive chemical ones. The group saved between \$45-\$75per hectare.
- 9 families were convinced to rotate their crops between vegetables, wheat and cotton instead of the common practice of planting the same crop each year. The result was a yield increase averaging 45% this year. Q4/00.

### **Communities Pool Resources and Pass-On Benefits**

In order to alleviate the financial burden of building a community-owned and managed cistern in the villages serviced by the USAID water plant in Turkmenbashi etrap of Dashoguz, the Water Users' Association Project introduced a "mini-grant" program two years ago. The program focused on voluntary mobilization of community resources in the form of time, labor and cash. Now at its conclusion, 13,234 residents are enjoying a daily supply of clean drinking water that is stored and distributed fairly and safely at the village level. Over the course of the program:

- Local residents contributed in cash more than \$8500 to the building of their cisterns. The project contributed \$17,500.
- 35 five-person water committees (175 volunteers) are actively managing their local cisterns and attending regular meetings at the village and etrap levels. The 139 cisterns are maintained and supervised by 278 caretakers (1 primary caretaker with an alternate) on a daily basis. These volunteers unlock the cistern for filling by water trucks and are directly responsible for the accurate and safe distribution to local member residents. Q4/00

### **NGO Extends Credit to Worthy Projects**

For the first time in Turkmenistan an NGO is working on a small micro-credit program. The American community in Ashgabad created a memorial fund for an American woman who lost her life while on assignment in the region and awarded Counterpart Consortium grantee, NGO *Keik Okara* with \$800 to administer the projects developed by local communities to start their own businesses. The small fund is designed to target community initiatives that specifically relate to women and children. The fund includes 6% monthly interest of which 3% is an administrative fee for the NGO. The remaining 3% is to be folded into a revolving fund to continue the credit for other communities. In April 2000 four six-month project proposals presented by the local refugee community were supported as a result of the micro-credit solicitation announced by the NGO. Two groups of women-artisans received a total of \$400 for two projects to produce hand-sewn clothing. \$300 was awarded to a group to open a consumer goods shop and \$100 was awarded to a group of Afghan refugee women to start a cafeteria. After only four months the local communities had already returned \$200, which was disbursed to two additional groups of artisans. These results have solidified the American community's confidence in the NGO's competency to manage the micro credit program and they are now considering awarding them another grant for small business development ideas. Q3/00

### **Local Authorities Endorse WUA Activities**

In a country where the government officially claims to be able to meet all the needs of its citizens, local authorities have come to recognize the benefit of social partnership, a cornerstone of the Water Users' Association project of Turkmenbashi etrap. The Association, which will become a localized operation in January 2001, is providing drinking water on a fee-for-service basis to 6,000 local residents with three water trucks received from USAID and the New Zealand Embassy. In a recent village meeting, the local five-person water committee asked their chairman of the farmers' union (the person who is responsible for the welfare of the all residents of the farm) why their community water cistern had stood empty for a month. His response clearly endorsed the role of NGOs in his community. He replied that the members of the community cisterns should choose the water users' association truck if they really want to receive drinking water. He said that government could not provide delivery because of the lack of trucks, spare parts and ability to meet the great demand. Such support from local authorities has contributed to a waiting list of 3,000 additional residents who would like to join the association to better secure a safe and clean supply of drinking water in their village. Q3/00

### **Resolving Ecological Issues Together**

Turkmen NGOs face many challenges related to the opportunity to exchange experiences with their colleagues in the region. The communications system is antiquated and the visa regime in Turkmenistan strongly limits the mobility of Turkmen NGOs, as well as reducing the possibility for travel of foreign NGOs into the country. *Cheshme*, a Counterpart grantee focusing on ecological education for the past 8 years, recently sent one member to visit the well-established Moscow based Russian NGO, *Social-Economical Unity*. The trip was planned within the framework of a Counterpart project and *Cheshme* was the only Turkmen NGO represented at the 6th International Conference on Ecological Education. As a result:

- The *Cheshme* representative entered the working group on Ecological Education in Institutes of Higher Education;
- *Cheshme* was included in a database on CIS eco-NGOs and is now receiving and disseminating ecological news to other Turkmen Eco-NGOs.
- *Cheshme* was awarded five rare books and other eco-education literature;
- *Cheshme* has established contacts with two renowned Russian universities and has identified projects for future collaboration. Q3/00

### **NGOs from Three Regions Link on Project Bringing Orphans to the Seashore**

Inter-sectoral partnerships are one significant indicator of the level of development of NGOs. Turkmen NGOs are “young” and do not yet have sufficient experience building long-term partnerships and using strategic planning for this goal. The idea of organizing a Summer Camp for the children of the Nebitdag orphanage brought together six NGOs from three oblasts – *Gunorta* (Nebitdag), *Yashil* (Ahal), *Young Cheetahs* (Dashoguz), *Young Geologists* (Ahal), *Civil Dignity* (Ahal), and *Dzhan* (Ahal). After four months of thoughtful and coordinated planning efforts, the group of NGOs carried-out a two-week Summer Camp at the beach for 50 children from the *Nebitdag* orphanage. The group attributed their success largely to the networking and skill-building they learned through Counterpart Consortium trainings such as “Social Partnership,” “Team building,” “Newsletter development,” and “Public Education through the Media.” The Program that was developed for the Summer Camp consisted of four parts: ecological games; basics of civic education; journalism; and science activities. Q3/00

### **Management Board Organized by 26 communities Advocating for Safe Drinking Water**

Before the Water Users' Association Project began its work in Turkmenbashi etrap of Dashoguz velayet, there was no end-user involvement in the design and management of the delivery system for getting drinking water to local villages served by the USAID-funded Reverse Osmosis Water Plant there. Over the past two months, residents in 26 communities<sup>2</sup> selected a total of 45 delegates to attend a special Association meeting at which they elected by secret ballot a 9-person Management Board. The Board is the first of its kind in Turkmenistan for such a public utility-style association. The 2 women and 7 men will go through a five part orientation to better understand their responsibilities, rights and authority in the overall management of the Association which now operates three trucks serving more than 8,000 users. In November they will report back to the general meeting on what they have learned and what their vision is for the future budget, directorship and expansion opportunities of the Association. Q3/00

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<sup>2</sup> Each community has a five-person water committee elected by local residents. The committee is responsible for resolving the drinking water problem for those residents in the village who want to participate in the project. The 26 water committee mentioned here represent some 8900 water users that are receiving drinking water through the project.

### **WUA Unites Villagers to Expand Access to Clean Water**

Since the USAID-funded Water Plant opened in 1995, the 300 people of Gin Yandak located 50 km from the plant never received delivery of water to their village. They were not even aware that they were entitled to a supply of 5 liters per person per day until they contacted the WUA staff to visit their village. After beginning to work with WUA, a group of 200 local residents built two community serdops but still did not receive water. Residents requested the WUA staff accompany them when they went to the water plant to raise this issue directly with the management. The residents learned during the visit that the water truck to fill their cistern indeed left the water plant and entered the collective farm but was redirected to private cisterns by the local farm chief. The residents then approached the farm chief directly to make their case that their cistern should be filled first because they were involved in the WUA Project and had the backing of the water plant. The community now receives regular deliveries and the members of the local water committee have become very active in the Association. One of their women committee members was elected to the Management Board in early September. Q3/00

### **WUA Sets Standard for Safe Water Storage and Community Organizing**

Safe and organized delivery, storage and distribution of the drinking water in villages served by the USAID-funded reverse osmosis water plant in Turkmenbashi etrap in northern Turkmenistan has been a challenge since it opened in 1995. To help alleviate these problems at the community level, the Water Users' Association (WUA) Project opened activities in 1999. One component of the project is mini-grants to build cisterns that are community-owned (51%) and community-managed. To date 97 community cisterns have been built. Recently local health authorities adopted the WUA cistern design as their official standard because it keeps the water safe from contamination, does not freeze in winter, stays cool in summer and is replenished regularly. At a recent association meeting the attending health inspector identified the greatest factor contributing the success of the cistern design is the effective self-management of the cistern by the community members. As a result, the local health authorities are encouraging other communities to contact the water users' association staff to facilitate community-organizing activities in their villages. Q3/00

### **Unity Solves Problems**

Counterpart grantee the *Water Users' Association Bereket* formed a year ago to support 163 peasant land renters who faced difficulties receiving enough water for their land because of the inefficiency of the existing water delivery system. Over the last three months, *Bereket* has constructed four check gates along the water canal, thereby improving the existing water distribution system and extending water delivery. As a result of this activity, a neighboring renter community of 93 peasant families joined the Association. The Association successfully received \$5,708 from the US Embassy Democracy Commission in Ashgabat to extend the program begun under the Counterpart grant to accommodate the increase in membership – now 265 members strong. Women members of the Association, witnessing the achievements of the group, formed another group called *Chinar* to carry out activities on village water and sanitation issues. With the assistance of WUA *Bereket* they worked out their charter, strategy for next steps, fundraising, and constituency building. Q3/00

### **Putting Skills to Practice Pays Off**

Financial sustainability is one of the most problematic questions facing Turkmen NGOs. Generally, NGOs attempt to attract financial and other support from international agencies, organizations or funds, and to a lesser degree from commercial and governmental structures. Special Olympics Committee and Social Adaptation Center *Umyt* of Turkmenbashi City are two unusual Turkmen NGOs who have learned to put their training to the test and practice their skills. Over the past year alone, these NGOs have jointly held 12 community meetings, 5 round table discussions and nine focus groups. Through these efforts, the membership of both organizations has increased fourfold. In the last 6-month period, 2 million manat (\$385) was generated by *Umyt Center* and 9.5 million manat (\$1,827) from Special Olympics. The number of volunteers in each organization also increased to 37 in the former and 43 in the latter. Q3/00

### **Modern Means of Communication Reach Turkmen NGOs**

Technical and financial constraints as well as to the absence of strong technological skills have limited the access of most Turkmen NGOs to most modern sources of information and communications such as e-mail and Internet. For six months, Counterpart Consortium has been offering free e-mail and Internet connections to 48 Turkmen NGOs, including 17 grantees. With assistance from the Embassy of Great Britain's *DFID Small Grant's Scheme* Counterpart leased a line enabling 24-hour access to the Internet, thereby expanding NGOs' use of the Internet. Additional results include:

- Internet traffic has quadrupled since access to higher-speed connections has been set up on two Web servers.
- The number of NGOs using the Internet has doubled to 80 in a four-month period.
- As a result training sessions on e-mail and Internet use, 52 NGO representatives possess basic Internet skills.
- Through announcements on the Internet and e-mail listserves, 15 NGOs have participated in seminars and conferences abroad. Cyber-contact has also lead to the visits of 5 partners organizations from America, England, Russian and Kazakhstan and relationships have been established between Turkmen NGOs and 125 foreign groups. Q 2/00

### **Turkmen NGOs as Implementing Partners of UNHCR**

Three years ago there were no NGOs in Turkmenistan working on refugee issues. Since then, 16 organizations, which have been actively involved with Counterpart as grantees, have learned how to manage projects effectively and are currently receiving financial assistance from UNHCR for follow-on projects to expand their work under their original Counterpart grants to include refugees. In the past year alone, ten local NGOs have been awarded grants totaling \$110,000 in areas of education, ecology, legal counseling, and reproductive health. Three of these NGOs have been contracted by UNHCR to conduct assessments in refugee communities for UNCHR health projects after receiving training in PRA from Counterpart. In addition, this quarter two NGOs have been accredited under the UNHCR CIS Conference (totaling 6 Turkmen NGOs with this status). Q 2/00

### **Ecological NGO Wins State Trust through Promotion of Results**

During the past four years the Turkmen ecological NGOs and initiative groups have gradually built positive relations with governmental structures. This was a result of the NGOs ability to continually demonstrate their comparative advantages, be well received by constituents, and their compatibility with government policies. As a result of their Counterpart Consortium funded projects, nine ecological organizations have shown a high level of potential and professionalism, enabling them to establish trust and credibility with government institutions. Various government representatives have heralded the concrete results of activities carried out by the NGOs as the foremost reason why various state structures are continually turning to NGOs to help them resolve issues. Public officials have referred to the professionalism of these NGOs, and their ability to effectively articulate the results of their work through roundtables and newsletters as the main contributor to a new "understanding" of NGO activities in the ecological sector.

- Over the past two years, ecological NGOs have executed 5 projects in partnership with governmental organizations that resulted in: two national conferences between NGOs and Government; one resolution presented to the National Curriculum Board; more than 15 roundtables and seminars; and more than 50 issues of newsletters reaching over 8,000 people.
- During a seminar on social partnership between Eco-NGOs and government, the representative of GORONO (Municipal government of national education) highly praised the activities of ecological organizations, citing specific examples of Eco-NGOs participation in the National Curriculum Development plans. She said that such interaction was unprecedented, considering the NGOs involved were unregistered, and also called for more public forums to discuss relevant issues.
- The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources recently rewarded seven Eco NGOs with letters of acknowledgement and books on environmental issues for their outstanding public education activities on the protection of the environment. Q 2/00

### **Counterpart Partners with local NGO on UNICEF program**

NGOs and CBOs located in the regions of Turkmenistan were largely isolated from access to financial resources prior to Counterpart's start-up in 1997. With the opening of the first regional Support Center in Dashoguz in 1998, Counterpart was able to identify several potential organizations working in rural areas of the region. Special training sessions were organized to give the NGOs in Dashoguz a head start in project management and design. The proximity to the Water User's Project enabled Counterpart staff to become directly involved in training activities and transfer of skills to those few NGOs located in the villages targeted by the WUA project. As a result, one NGO, *Uchgün*, has surfaced as a capable project implementer and fundraiser. The initiative of this NGO is evidenced in its participation in such advanced trainings as fundraising, constituency building and newsletter development which resulted in the following:

- *Uchgün* sub-contracted by Counterpart in the amount of \$1,500 for the hygiene education portion of part 3 of the UNICEF Water and Sanitation Project.
- *Uchgün* was recently awarded a Peace Corps mini grant in the amount of \$2,000 to carry-out a dental hygiene project. Q2/00.

### **Making the Most of Internet Resources**

It is critical for NGOs to take advantage of promotional and informational resources. Representatives from the NGO *UNICOM*, an organization dedicated to expanding access to trivia for intellectual competitions to teenagers in Turkmenistan, has participated in many training activities conducted by Counterpart Consortium including Information Resources of the Internet. One member became so interested that he was trained as a trainer in this module and has assisted over 30 other NGO representatives understand how to benefit from the Internet. As a result, the NGO now publishes the Web page What? Where? and When? through the *Association of Moscow Clubs* web site. This is one of the first Internet sites published by a Turkmen NGO, providing the NGO with an opportunity to share its newsletter online, to be linked with additional web sites and to be easily located by interested organizations and individuals. They are now aware of events and activities relevant to their activities, and have attracted ten more participants to the competitions of their organization. Organizations in St. Petersburg and Odessa are sending information to UNICOM for posting on their site. The web page is also one of 20 sites located on the international "webring" website located at [http://www.chgk.msk.ru/history/2000/achg\\_press/gazeta.htm](http://www.chgk.msk.ru/history/2000/achg_press/gazeta.htm). Q 2/00

### **NGO Becomes More Independent and Sustainable**

NGOs in Turkmenistan have expressed great demand for increased skills in fundraising, project management and design; all of which are important building blocks for institutional development. These skills become more critical as the requirement for NGOs to demonstrate their financial sustainability grows. Grantee *Annageldy* has been working with Counterpart Consortium Turkmenistan since June of 1998 and has received a package of services including training in areas such as fundraising, project design, and development of a TTAP, with a focus on financial sustainability and fundraising. Having obtained those skills, the NGO applied to several donors for a grant funding, including the British "Know How" Fund, which granted them \$9,000 for computer equipment, office furniture and some medical equipment for HIV/AIDS diagnostics. *Annageldy* used this equipment for their Ashgabad branch located in the Turkmenistan AIDS Center. As the result of this funding, the NGO has attracted three volunteers, and has expanded their constituency base by establishing a strong partnership with the Turkmenistan AIDS Center and the UNAIDS program in Turkmenistan. Q 2/00

### **NGOs Reach Out Through Media**

The ability to publish information regarding the activities of NGOs is a rare phenomenon in Turkmenistan, especially for non-registered organizations. Nonetheless, there is a strong effort made from the NGO sector to disseminate information on activities in order to broaden the public interest in NGO activities as well as to interest potential members and volunteers. Working under a Counterpart grant, the NGO *Green Team* has carried out an ecological education campaign that successfully utilized mass media outlets. The publications included 7 issues of informational booklets on 7 ecological themes distributed to over 1200 students; 5 issues of information bulletins distributed in Turkmen and Russian to over 500; people and a record 16 articles published in Turkmen newspapers over the course of their project. As a result of these publications the NGO experienced an:

- Increase in membership by 7 members;
- Expanded beneficiary base, broadened to 18 schools in Ashgabad that receive publications; and
- Expansion of NGOs activities to include ecological events in the Koitendag and Baherden regions of the country in addition to three kindergartens and one orphanage. Q 2/00

### **Defending the Right to Be Like Others**

At the end of 1998, the Orthopedic Factory of Ashgabad, which is the only institution to produce artificial limbs in Turkmenistan, reduced its capacity by 50%. Production was ceased in mid 1999 leaving 8,000 disabled people in Turkmenistan to seek alternative solutions for prosthetics. The Disabled Union, a grantee of Counterpart Consortium, received hundreds of visits and letters requesting assistance to locate sources for purchasing artificial limbs. The NGO began an advocacy campaign by writing letters to the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry as well as the Orthopedic Factory on behalf of its beneficiaries. The leaders met regularly with representatives from government agencies to lobby for reinstating the production of prosthetics. As a result of six months of campaigning, the Ministry of Health identified a funding base to justify a directive to the Orthopedic Factory to gradually resume the production of artificial limbs. This effort resulted in 7 disabled people from across the country have received new artificial limbs, saving them 75% off of the world market price to order such a prosthetic from Moscow. Q 2/00

### **Ripples in the Lake of Civic Education**

In Turkmenistan, although there is a growing public demand for civic education and information, there is yet no state program. In response, Counterpart grantee *Civil Dignity* has conducted 47 seminars on 14 civic education topics over the last 10 months. In total, the NGO conducted 20 more seminars than planned under their grant project to meet the demand from other NGOs and students to acquire information. 35 of the trainings were for youth and 12 for an adult audience, totaling 297 participants from four regions of Turkmenistan. 10 adults and 5 young trainers were trained as trainers and have already conducted 14 trainings for 196 participants. In addition, two initiative groups have formed in the cities of Dashoguz and Turkmenbashi in hopes of developing civic education in their communities. One seminar model was translated into Turkmen for free by a teacher who decided to extend the training to her students. She has used the materials to conduct four trainings for 34 participants from the Agro-business School in Turkmenabad and remote villages of Lebap velayat. Two NGOs in Ashgabad have also incorporated elements of the *Civil Dignity* training into their own activities. As a result of excellent work and outreach to its constituency, the NGO expanded its beneficiary base to three additional regions of Turkmenistan and recruited 15 volunteers to follow-up on civic. Q 2/00



## UZBEKISTAN

### **Open Library Negotiates New Space and Expands Outreach**

For the past three years the Counterpart-supported Open Library of Legal Information has been providing legal information through their office and from the Internet. The Library is located on the second floor of the Institute of Law, where access is very limited and controlled by the administration of the Institute. The NGO made several failed attempts to renegotiate their space with the Institute. As a result of TTAP exercises conducted with the NGO, the organization reorganized the Board, including the addition of Counterpart staff member Oybek Boltaev. This new Board was able to convince the administration of the Institute to provide the Library with another room. Now the NGO is located on the ground floor of the Institute, in a room that has a separate entrance. The NGO is now able to provide access for the disabled and diversify the client base. Now the disabled, pensioners, housewives and other members of the community visit the Library in addition to the regular student visits. Since the library moved to the new space the number of visitors increased from 225 in September to 686 in October. The NGO's membership has also increased from 21 new members per month to 54 persons per month in the new locale. During the first two years of operation the NGO attracted 447 members. The organization has signed on 108 new members in the first two months as a result of increased visibility and access. Q4/00.

### **Soros Foundation and USIS Support Educational Programs for Young People of Uzbekistan**

One of the largest deterrents to enhanced programming for the NGO *Family and Children* is the lack of resources to address specific social problems, such as prostitution, drug abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases. As a result of Counterpart training and consultations in Project Design and Fundraising, *Family and Children* has successfully received support from two international organizations – USIS and the Soros Foundation – to implement innovative programs to address a multitude of social problems. As a result of these programs:

- *Family and Children* is educating 1,500 school children at ten Tashkent high schools and 800 Tashkent university students on social problems such as prostitution, drug abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases. The program's messages have been well-received by the students, prompting remarks such as "They are finally talking about this with us" and "My friend's attitude to me became kinder and more understanding."
- Long-term cooperation with Uzbekistan educational institutions has been established as a result of the interest of students and teachers generated through these programs.
- 56 young women in the Kokand women's penal colony are receiving education and support in the areas of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Further, these women are being taught vocational skills such as hairdressing, cooking, and basic computer skills. Q4/00.

### **Volunteers receive paid jobs in a city of international tourism in Uzbekistan.**

Unemployment has become a critical issue in Uzbekistan. In 1999 the Bukhara Regional Center for Information and Culture organized training for a Club of Young Leaders in the following issues, developed using Counterpart methodologies: "Setting Goals", "Planning According to a Logical Structure", "Conflict and Mutual Relations", and "The Art of Communication". Six of these individuals became volunteers for the Center and participated in special Counterpart trainings, including a conference on "Perspectives of Development for Volunteer Initiatives in Uzbekistan" conducted with assistance of USAID Global Training for Development Project. Local private hotels are now turning to the Center as a resource for recommendations of qualified specialists. Three volunteers have been hired by two private hotels and two other hotels have made inquiries for three more candidates. Q4/00.

### **Charitable Center Mekhr-Sakhovat Expands Support**

At present one of the most pressing social problems is the near starvation existence of the poorest of people in Kokand. After having participated the Counterpart seminar on Fundraising and having received technical assistance from Counterpart in how to write applications to sponsors, the administrator of the Charitable Center Mekhr-Sakhovat (Mercy) approached the manager of the Kokand meat-cutting factory for financial assistance. The manager of the factory paid for air time at local TV station Mulokot, which the NGO used to address potential sponsors throughout the city. This appeal was well received and contributed to an expanded sponsorship base of both corporations and individuals. As a result, the NGO receives and distributes the following products for free on a monthly basis:

- 20 kilos of dairy products granted by a dairy factory
- 20 kilos of bread and pastries from a local bakery
- 4-5 kilos of meat from the meat-cutting factory Q4/00.

### **NGO Resource Helps Public Library Expand Legal Resources**

One of the main problems of libraries in Uzbekistan is the lack of current resources and access to the latest information in specialized topics. To search for alternatives for addressing this problem, Dilorom Shukurova, a member of the *Republican Association of Librarians* consulted with Counterpart's Tashkent Resource Center. Counterpart identified the training, during which Ms. Shukurova learned about the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) *Pushkin Library Project*, which aims to support long-distance regions of CIS through distribution of specialized texts. Ms. Shukurova was able to reach an agreement with the *All-Russian Library of Foreign Literature* for the inclusion of the Fergana Library in the project. According to this agreement the Fergana Library is eligible for a 75% discount on the purchase of Russian-print, new editions and publications on jurisprudence. The first consignment in the amount of \$1,000 allowed the Library to purchase 300 books that reach a student population of 1200. The Fergana Library is the only library in Uzbekistan that has this privilege, thus allowing students of legal educational institutions in the Fergana Valley to access the latest information. Ms. Shukurova has provided information to the Tashkent Resource Center about these new materials, which in turn is highlighting this resource through its monthly bulletin, *Initiative*. Q4/00.

### **The Number of Associations of Professionals in Fergana Valley is Increasing.**

The protection of rights and professional interests of people of different groups is a significant problem in Uzbek society. As a result of Counterpart support through the Kokand Civil Society Support Center, the following new professional associations have been established in Fergana Valley: the *Association of Educational Workers*; *Association of Doctors/Endocrinologists*; the Fergana and Namangan branches of the *Society of Consumer Rights Protection*; the Fergana, Namangan, and Andijan branches of the *Uzbek Association of Reproductive Health*; the *Association of Librarians*; and the *Association of French-Speakers*. Counterpart is providing ongoing assistance and consultations on project design to these associations, for example: the Association of Endocrinologists is providing training in goiter prevention, where Counterpart helped provide training to 540 people from four mahallas; the Association on Reproductive Health is training 400 women and 600 adolescents in birth control methods in accordance with a Counterpart funded initiative; and the Association of Educators is creating a database of disabled children in 60 mahallas in Kokand with advisory assistance from Counterpart. Q4/00.

### **NGO Network Hamkor Unites 70 Uzbek NGOs.**

In spite of the growing activity and increasing number of NGOs in Uzbekistan, NGOs in Uzbekistan do not have sufficient interaction with one another. They are poorly informed about their colleagues' activities and areas of mutual recourse. As a result of Counterpart training and ongoing support, the leaders of the most powerful NGOs in Uzbekistan worked together to create Hamkor – an NGO network in Uzbekistan. The initiative group included leaders from the following NGOs: *Business Women's Association*, Tashkent; *Ael Resource Center for Women and Families*, Samarkand; *Fergana Regional Center for Social and Legal Support of Women and Children*; the *Sabo Center for Women and Children*, Tashkent; *Renaissance Association*, Nukus; and the *Association of Auditors and Accountants*, Tashkent. A chairman, who is elected every four months, and three coordinators who lead the strategic directions run *Hamkor*. By working together through this network, NGOs in Uzbekistan will be able to share resources, exchange information, promote the development of new NGOs, implement common programs and solve similar problems, and raise funds for larger projects that can be implemented through partnership. The functioning of this network of more than 70 NGOs fosters more stable civil society development in Uzbekistan. Q4/00.

### **NGO Participates in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in Uzbekistan.**

At present, governmental organizations are not receptive to the introduction of new curricula, technologies, and NGO experiences in the Uzbekistan educational system. The NGO "For an Ecologically Clean Fergana" developed a program for comprehensive ecological education for students from kindergarten through high school, taking into consideration community needs. Additionally the NGO developed a plan for retraining industrial specialists. As a result of consultations with Counterpart, including a TTAP and training in "Social Partnership" and "Advocacy," the NGO's program was included in the Macroeconomics Ministry's National Strategy for Uzbekistan's Sustainable Development and approved as a compulsory discipline. In November 2000 the Ministry of Education and the State Committee of Nature had a meeting to discuss program specifications. This long-term partnership between NGOs and these ministries will facilitate the introduction of non-traditional educational tools based on interactive methods. Q4/00.

### **The Increasing Number of Women's NGOs in the Fergana Valley Indicates the Growth in Women's activism**

Women living in villages and rural communities near Kokand are unaware of their legal rights and are unable to protect these rights. The Business Women's Association (BWA) of Kokand has been working to expand their programs to increase women's knowledge of their legal rights, of economic opportunities under modern economic conditions, of healthcare, and of education for children and adolescents. Through technical assistance and training in "Project Design" and "Social Partnership" and prior experience as a Counterpart grantee, the BWA was able to develop the "New Opportunities for Women" project, which received funding from Winrock International. As a result, 27 women's initiative groups were formed, each of them consisting of twelve to fifteen women; a resource center was established under the auspices of the BWA to support the development of the initiative groups; and monthly meetings were organized for information sharing. Follow-up funding has been given to three of the initiative groups for a series of seminars on women's legal rights. Q4/00.

### **NGO Secures Finance for 5000 Publications of its Handbook**

The *Center for Culture of Health Preservation*, a Nukus NGO, has been promoting the idea and practice of preventive health as means of cheap health care for the population of Karakalpakstan. To promote the idea more broadly the NGO developed a handbook of methods for preventative health care, but could not afford to publish it. Counterpart has provided the NGO with numerous consultations and training in fundraising. For several months the NGO approached a number of local state and joint-stock enterprises and obtained an amount equivalent to \$2,000. This amount enabled the NGO to produce 5,000 copies of the 64-page handbook in the Karakalpak language. The book will be disseminated throughout Nukus and Karakalpakstan, and any income generated through book sales will cover the expenditures of health care seminars for schools, universities, mahallas, and others. Q3/00

### **Uzbekistan NGO has become the 1<sup>st</sup> CIS NGO accepted to IFAC**

To attract foreign investments in to Uzbekistan, the government has been reforming the accounting and auditing system to conform with international standards. In May 2000 the *Association of Accountants and Auditors of Uzbekistan*, a Counterpart grantee and former target NGO, became the first NGO in the CIS to be accepted as a member of the International Federation of Accountants. IFAC is a world leader in development and introduction of international accounting standards. One of the benefits of membership is that the Uzbekistan NGO now has the rights to publish and distribute international accounting and auditing norms. Q3/00

### **Helping People to help themselves**

Many families from the Aral Sea region migrated and settled in small villages in the outskirts of Nukus in search of livelihood. The Public Research Center Nukus, with the cooperation of the Nukus Civil Society Support Center, conducted a social survey followed by a PCA research exercise with the people of the *Koskol* village and identified unemployment as the main problem. The CSSC staff helped the people of this village establish contact with local Hokimiyat officials to seek help in solving the problem of unemployment. The Nukus Support Center staff helped the people from the village form a committee to deal with their problems and take a leading role in dealing with government and other concerned officials. The committee has requested assistance to solve the unemployment problem, but other successes have resulted from their efforts with the Hokimiyat. The committee is working with officials from the Hokimiyat to plan construction of water and gas pipelines in the village. The Hokimiyat is considering the request of the committee to include the village in the city plan in which people will get more benefits from the Hokimiyat. Q3/00

### **Helping Development of NGOs in Fergana Valley**

The lack of NGOs in Fergana Valley has been a big impediment to undertaking development activities in this region. There are fewer NGOs to help communities solve problems, particularly those related to disabled children, reproductive health and the protection of consumer rights. The Kokand Support Center has been working to address this problem and has encouraged the formation of new NGOs in the region. Through the NGO Development Program trainings, consultations and technical assistance have helped three NGOs open branch centers in other cities of Fergana Valley – the Center for Disabled Children *Umr*, the Uzbek Association on Reproductive Health, and the Consumer Rights Protection Society. These NGOs have already started their activities in Andijan, Fergana and Namangan in the framework of their mission. Q3/00

### **Counterpart Teaches NGOs how to Save Money**

The questions posed to Counterpart by NGOs indicate that they are not aware of the tax incentives for non-profit organizations provided in Uzbekistan legal regulations. Knowledge acquired at Counterpart seminars on Taxation and Accounting and through regular consultations with Counterpart has advanced effective financial management of NGOs allowing for maximum available tax relief. Some examples of successful financial management include:

- According to a decree by the Cabinet of Ministers of 1998, all individuals working with grant support of international organizations and having a special approval by the State Committee on Science and Technology, are exempt from income tax. Unaware of this decree, NGO employees have been contributing 40% of their monthly salaries toward overpayment of the NGO salary fund. For example, *Mekhri Women's Society* lost .5 million sums from 1999-2000 and *KRIDI* has paid income tax for three months in 2000. Now NGOs have learned how to seek the approval by the Committee and to take into consideration all tax relieves – they save money.
- NGO *Mekhri* was looking for optimal means for financial sustainability and planned to register its *Training and Consultations Center for Women and their Families* as a limited liability enterprise. Counterpart seminars revealed apparent tax advantages for registering this entity as a subsidiary, which *Mekhri* has done to ensure more advantageous financial management. Q3/00

### **NGO produces leaflets for state health department**

One of the social problems in Uzbekistan is health education for the population. Counterpart affiliate, the *Bukhara Informational and Cultural Center (BICC)* organized a training workshop for Bukhara women NGOs, health officials and other medical workers. The workshop on reproductive health and women's rights was conducted by the Tashkent NGO *Center for Women-Leaders*. After the workshop, the City Department of Health appealed to *BICC* requesting to develop and print a leaflet on sanitary education for the general public. *BICC* published 1,000 leaflets and has received payment equivalent to \$80. The leaflets will be distributed by the Health Department to its clients – urban and rural populations. Q3/00

### **Political Parties Willing to Cooperate with NGOs**

One of the factors slowing the sustainable development of NGOs in Uzbekistan is the lack of dialogue between government, political parties and NGOs. For some time, Counterpart Consortium has been promoting such dialogue through its emphasis on social partnership in seminars and roundtables on the issue. In July the national party, *Fidokorlar* (the Faithful), organized a forum entitled "Cooperation of Political Parties and NGOs" with the support several international donors including OSCE. It was initially designed to include only GONGOs, but Counterpart recommended a list of grassroots local NGOs for participation. The conference organizers accepted these groups and the resulting forum included representatives from four political parties, GONGOs and grassroots NGOs. The leaders of the parties declared their willingness to cooperate with NGOs to build a democratic civil society in Uzbekistan. The leader of *Fidokorlar* proposed to lobby the interests of NGOs in the government. This was the first move by political parties towards NGOs, and a promising step towards increased cooperation. Q3/00

### **Facilitating Social Partnership**

In the transition period in Uzbekistan, the economic condition of poor families across the country has worsened. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of employment opportunities and access to productive resources. The condition of the children of these families is beyond imagination, as they are deprived of the most basic of rights, and the social benefits program of the government is not able to support these families. The Nukus-based NGO *Fitness Center Kuuat* is working with the most destitute children in two areas of the city to provide them with education, food and clothing. *Kuuat* lacked the funding to support all of those in need. As a result of training in modules such as "NGO and the Community" and technical assistance from the Nukus staff, *Kuuat* successfully appealed to the local joint venture corporation *Uzdunrobita* for funding. With the grant of 230,000 sums the NGO has helped 150 children in the two areas procure schoolbooks and stationary to continue their education. Q3/00

### **Central Asian NGOs have united to improve the national accounting and auditing systems**

With the aim to increase the professional status of accountants and to foster the introduction of international accounting and auditing standards in Central Asian countries, *The Association of Accountants and Auditors of Uzbekistan*, a Counterpart grantee and recipient of several trainings, has initiated integration of the resources of four Central Asian countries. In March 2000 the *Central Asian Board of Accountants and Auditors* was established through the joint efforts of the *Association of Accountants and Auditors of Uzbekistan*, *Chamber of Auditors of Kazakhstan*, *Chamber of Auditors of Kyrgyzstan*, the *Commercial University of Tajikistan*, and the *Tajik University of Law, Business and Politics*. Yuri Itkin, the Head of the Uzbekistan Association, was elected chairman for a 2-year term, and, accordingly, Uzbekistan became a chairing country of the Board. The responsibilities were divided among the member-countries, who are now engaged in elaborating the procedures, principles and instruments for development of educational programs, adoption of professional ethics, promotion of international accounting and auditing standards in relevant countries and other activities intended to develop their economical and legal infrastructures. Q3/00

### **NGO Provided Wheelchairs to 23 Disabled in Karakalpakstan**

The disabled population in Karakalpakstan is estimated to be the largest of all the oblasts in Uzbekistan. Federal funds and social departments are not able to meet the growing demand. A majority of the disabled lack wheelchairs and are confined to spending their time in one room. With training in fundraising skills from the Counterpart Nukus Support Center, the *Karakalpak Society for the Disabled* used Counterpart Consortium's donor database and wrote 17 letters of request to state institutions, embassies and donors. The action resulted in \$2,900 donation from the German Embassy in Uzbekistan, which allowed the Society to purchase wheelchairs from a local manufacturer to distribute to 23 physically disabled persons. Q 2/00

### **The First NGO Press Conference for the First Training and Consulting Center in Uzbekistan**

Uzbek NGOs have been unable to fully utilize the media for publicity and promotion of services. *Women's Society Mekhri* conducted the first press conference to announce the opening of its Training and Consulting Center for Women and their Families. This Center is the first NGO-established, self-financing enterprise. *Mekhri* leaders applied skills learned at Counterpart's newly introduced seminar "How to Conduct a Press-Conference" and used funds from a Counterpart grant to conduct the press conference. In the two months following the press conference 11 articles about the Center were published in city and national press, which resulted in a 75% increase in calls from potential clients, women, children and makhalla representatives. Another unintended result was an increase in calls from those interested in working with the Center. The range of inquiries from potential staff is helping *Mekhri* refine the scope and demand of jobs, leading to more effective staff recruitment. Q 2/00

### **Karakalpak Disabled Benefit from NGO and Ministry Partnership**

The Economic crisis has had a deplorable impact on the population of Karakalpakstan, and the disabled are among the most vulnerable. *The Vocational School of the Karakalpak Society of the Disabled* has been training disabled youth and adults in computer skills. At the Counterpart Consortium seminar "Social Partnership" the NGO became acquainted with a Ministry of Labor official. As a result of this partnership with the *Society*, the Labor Ministry of Karakalpakstan provided job placement in the second half of 1999 for 17 of the NGO's trainees. Q 2/00

### **Bukhara NGOs Use Social Partnership Skills to Work Together**

As a result of a Social Partnership seminar conducted for NGOs and government officials at the Bukhara Civil Society Support Center the following efforts of government institutions and NGOs have been consolidated:

- *Oidin Crisis Center* established connections with the Rayon Deputy Hokim. One of the first results of this relationship was to solve the problem of a disabled woman who had not receive her stipend from the makhalla committee;
- *German Cultural Center*, jointly with Bukhara State University, secondary school #4, and a German volunteer, organized a national holiday for German families. The leader of the Center remarked after the seminar: "... how effective it is to work with various non-profit and government institutions";
- *Bukhara Information and Cultural Center (BICC)*, *Youth Club*, *Teenagers' Club*, *German Cultural Center*, and a Jewish school have united with the State Committee on Nature Protection, Children's Fund, and the *Ecosan* Environmental Fund to celebrate the Earth Day 2000. About 250 participants took part in races, a poll on environmental issues, and "subbotniks" (voluntary city clean-up days). Organizers were successful in their goal to create awareness of environmental problems in the region to the general public and local government. Zaynab Sali the leader of *BICC*, indicated the joint planning was collegial and easy, attributing success due to the strength of the Counterpart training. Q 2/00

### **KRIDI – A Skillful Fundraiser**

*KRIDI*, Counterpart target NGO, has greatly expanded its funding base beyond the typical grant process by receiving in-kind contributions and discounts from local and international sources. The access and affordability of *KRIDI* services attract new clients and ensure a larger NGO constituency. The examples below demonstrate only few fundraising successes of NGO:

- World Concern is providing school accessories, garments, bed clothes, home-attendants for disabled children, and at-home training for children;
- *Engrach International Charity Foundation* is providing medical support, including dental treatments for disabled children and informational-training programs for disabled children and their parents; and
- The Institute of Asian Culture and Development is providing concessionary diagnostics, consultations and speech therapy for children, massage training for parents, and medicine. Q 2/00

### **Association of Journalists “Civil Society” Register in Uzbekistan**

To eliminate the deficit of analytical and conceptual information about non-profit activities in Uzbekistan, journalist members of the Association of Journalists *Civil Society* are dedicated to increasing public awareness of the non-profit sector. The NGO encountered continuous impediments when registering the organization, since a GONGO association of journalists had already been in existence. The NGO started an aggressive public education campaign by writing articles about various issues of public concern and NGOs that dealt with them. Counterparts support to the Association included conducting: seminars in “NGO & Community” for potential members, a TTAP for the organization, and facilitating meetings for members to discuss the charter. As a result, the Association has registered and its members-journalists are able to represent the Third Sector, writing about NGOs in national and local papers and advocating for journalists’ rights on the governmental level. Official standing also allows the Association to seek diverse funding sources, recruit new members and develop journalists’ professional skills. Q 2/00

### **Department of Justice Becomes More Responsive to NGOs**

The NGO registration procedure is officially limited to a two-month period, but usually takes five to six months. This delay is a result of lengthy review process of the NGO’s funding documentation by officials from the Ministry of Justice. In December 1999 Counterpart Consortium and GTD/USAID conducted a workshop entitled “NGO Accounting and Transparency” to which NGOs of Fergana Valley and officials from tax committees and departments of justice were invited. At the workshop NGO leaders and state executives talked face-to-face and learned from each other their concerns and problems, including the registration process. In the six months following the workshop three new NGOs were registered and three others have applied for registration to the Department of Justice of the Fergana Region. All the documents were reviewed and applications were considered within the two-month period as outlined in the law. Q 2/00

### **NGO Seminars Boost Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in Bukhara Region**

Low economic literacy of businesswomen in the Bukhara Region, as well as other parts of Uzbekistan, hinders the development of small and medium businesses run by women. The *Businesswomen Association of Bukhara Region*, a Counterpart grantee, has conducted 5 seminars on business education for 80 women-entrepreneurs in four districts and has provided consultations to 103 businesswomen. The monitoring and evaluation activities by the NGO showed the following results:

- 14 women have received bank credits;
- one woman organized sewing and hairdressing workshops for 24 women;
- one woman leased equipment and started construction for a agricultural product processing unit;
- ten hectares of land were obtained for farming; and
- one embroidery shop and one bakery were opened, each providing jobs to 5 women. Q 2/00

### **Health NGO Educates Remote Rural Communities**

For the past 10 years Fergana Valley residents have been severely susceptible to endocrine diseases. The most vulnerable have been the populations of the rural areas, especially women of fertile age. The Association of Endocrinologists of Kokand City has completed a project on health education in five villages. The *Kokand* NGO Support Center has provided technical support and consultation on project design to Abt Associates/USAID. Within five months, the NGO conducted 30 seminars for 1064 villagers, which comprised 841 women of fertile age, 33 pregnant women and 190 adolescents. An impact assessment poll conducted by the Center, revealed that 64% of those trained showed a marked increased in awareness of preventive measures, use of modern medicines and methods of treatment for endocrine illnesses. Q 2/00



## **ICNL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **KAZAKHSTAN**

#### **ICNL The Draft Tax Code Still Remains the Hottest Issue in the Legislative Drafting Agenda**

In the process of drafting the Tax Code in Kazakhstan, members of Parliament approved it in the Majilis, the lower Chamber, in December 2000. There will be further debate within Parliament. ICNL has been working and actively discussing the NGO taxation provisions with deputies of the Majilis their staff and various tax experts advocating changes for interested parties, primarily small businesses and nonprofit organizations. During the three month period, ICNL and its local partner NGOs conducted a seminar on NGO taxation specifically designed for members of Parliament, participated in live TV debates on the draft Tax Code organized for the Kazakhstani citizens, as well as conducted several meetings with a number of officials and organizations on this particular issue. In many respects it is ICNL's achievement that original provisions of the draft Tax Code regulating NGOs have been significantly improved from an unfavorable orientation (fall 2000) to a positive orientation (winter 2000-01). The most recent provisions allow tax exemptions of income generated from certain social services. These provisions were improved partly due to ICNL's efforts. In addition, the definition of a grant was improved by expanding the definition to include foreign non-governmental public organizations and foundations. Q4/00.

#### **Continues Fight for Tax Benefits and is Winning**

The Ministry of Government Revenue has been drafting a new Tax Code. When adopted this new Tax Code will replace the entire existing tax legislation. For the past several months, the Ministry of Government Revenue has been changing the provisions of this draft Tax Code affecting NGOs on many occasions. ICNL has been actively involved in the drafting process working directly with the drafters including the Minister of Government Revenue himself. The publicity surrounding the draft Tax Code and its frequent debate is a precedent for Kazakhstan. During the whole period of discussion, NGOs held several press conferences and debates on the draft provisions. ICNL is and continues to be very vocal in this debate. Q3/00.

#### **Lower House of Parliament Adopts New NGO Law**

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, the lower house of parliament, the Majilis, debated and adopted the new NGO law. ICNL had the rare opportunity to be present in the chamber for this historic vote. ICNL contributed to the drafting of this law and initiated the law in partnership with the Senate Legislative Committee. Although, the Majilis did not adopt all of ICNL's recommendations, the adoption of the bill is a positive development. Firstly, the law will establish real foundations and further define the appropriate organizational legal forms of NGOs. Secondly, the law creates a solid framework for additional laws on associations, foundations and institutions. Q2/00.

#### **Historic Vote -- First Successful "Deputies Initiative"**

Prior to this year, all laws in Kazakhstan were initiated and drafted by the Ministries. The only role for Parliament was to approve such laws. Most observers labeled this unbalanced system a "rubber-stamp". To fulfill the proper role of Parliament, the Senate Legislative Committee, along with ICNL, initiated an NGO law (mentioned-above). If successful, this law will be the first law initiated, drafted and adopted solely by deputies - the first successful 'deputies' initiative' in Kazakhstan. As stated above, on May 24<sup>th</sup>, the lower house of Parliament adopted the NGO law. The law will now go to the Senate where it stands an excellent chance of passage and then onto the President for signature. It has already been established that the deputies would also like to draft the instructions to the law. This is usually done by the ministries but technically can be done by Parliament. So it seems that the deputies, proud of this historic achievement want to follow it to its end. The task will be charged to ICNL's current colleagues in the Senate/Majilis who have requested ICNL's continued support in the effort. Q2/00.

### **ICNL Participates in NGO Press Conference that Impacts Draft Tax Code**

The governmental working group (mentioned above) finished the latest version of a new Tax Code and passed it on to the Government and public for review. This version even worsened the tax situation for NGOs. As such, the NGO community (a coalition of NGOs including the Fund for a Tax Culture) decided to organize a large-scale press conference. The press conference took place on June 28<sup>th</sup> and gathered mostly all republican and independent media. The main speakers at the press conference were ICNL as a representative of international community and expert in NGO legislation; Sholpan Baibolova, President of "Tax Culture Formation" Foundation – an NGO dealing with tax issues; and Valentina Sevrukova, the President of Confederation of Non-Commercial Organizations. As a result, the criticisms of the NGO community were highly publicized in print media and on national TV (Russian and Kazak versions). To overcome this, the government invited ICNL and local NGOs to directly participate in drafting the provisions governing NGOs. Q2/00.

### **ICNL Fights for Tax Benefits and Wins**

As reported last period, the Ministry of Government Revenue proposed radical changes to the Tax Code that allowed tax exemptions applicable to grant funds. These exemptions saved both local NGOs and international organizations 26% on each dollar spent on salaries. Although the magnitude of the changes is widespread, the lower levels of the tax authorities refused to implement or accept the amendments at face value and denied the benefits as applicable to various local and foreign NGOs. To combat this, ICNL met directly with the Minister of Government Revenue seeking clarification of the new exemptions to which the Ministry answered in the affirmative. That is, the benefits are applicable and the decisions of the tax authorities were reversed. Q2/00.

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

### **Implementation of NGO Law is Vital for NGOs**

The NGO law of Kyrgyzstan adopted in the summer of 1999 has been considered one of the more progressive laws in the entire NIS. The reasons why the law is considered progressive include 1) non-commercial organizations can conduct activities without having to be registered, 2) the NGO law does not set territorial limitations for NGOs regardless of their organizational-legal form, 3) Public associations can be created at the initiative of three and more individuals.

Before Presidential elections in fall 2000 the Ministry of Justice made an attempt to undermine positive effect of the Law with proposing amendments to it. If adopted proposed provisions would prohibit unregistered associations and complicate the registration procedure. Due to the efforts of the NGO community and the Committee on Public Associations and Policy on Information of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament, these amendments were not adopted and were put on hold. The Committee with the Senate recognized in its decision regarding the proposed amendments that in its current form they are unacceptable and cannot be adopted. However, ICNL continues to closely monitor the situation with the draft. Currently it is preparing commentary to these amendments. At ICNL's request the Committee issued a written decision summarizing the discussion of the proposed MoJ amendments, which will be distributed among interested parties and will help to secure the success with rejecting these amendments.

Another restrictive draft Law on Advocature was withdrawn from the Parliament by its drafter, the Ministry of Justice, after the rejection it received from the Parliament. ICNL efforts made it happen. At the request of the Association of Attorneys of Kyrgyzstan ICNL prepared comments to the draft Law. These comments were broadly distributed among those who are interested on the subject. ICNL has been providing technical assistance to the Association of Attorney of Kyrgyzstan in its successful lobbying efforts against the draft. Q4/00.

### **ICNL and its Partner Association of Lawyers of Kyrgyzstan achieve reconsideration of Government amendments to the Law on Advocacy Activity**

ICNL began an examination of a very hot issue in Kyrgyzstan. The government, via the Ministry of Justice, is pressing for amendments to the law "On Advocates". In general, these amendments violate the freedom of association principle. Members of Lawyers Association and free-lance attorneys agreed with parliamentarians to eliminate these deteriorating provisions. Q3/00.

### **Ministry of Justice Adopts ICNL Recommendations**

As with any new law, the NGO law of Kyrgyzstan was further defined and elaborated in subsequent instructions issued by the Ministry of Justice. Such instructions usually describe in detail how the law is to be implemented. As such, the content of the instructions is critical. Last quarter, ICNL obtained the draft comments from the Ministry of Justice and provided suggested revisions. In an official answer, the Ministry announced that it adopted two of the four recommendations regarding implementation of the new NGO law. The adopted provisions will help to limit arbitrary governmental action against NGOs. Q2/00.

### **ICNL Invited by Government to Participate in Official Commission to Draft Tax Provisions Regarding NGOs**

ICNL was honored this reporting period by the Government of Kyrgyzstan by becoming the second foreign entity to sit on a governmental commission on taxes. In this capacity, ICNL will make recommendations to the government on the taxation of NGOs. Final amendments are due this Fall and will be voted on sometime in December. If successful, ICNL can bring appropriate tax benefits to NGOs in accordance with international norms. Q2/00.

## **TAJIKISTAN**

### **The Government Continues Reform on Civil Legislation**

The government of Tajikistan and the NGO community are actively pursuing NGO law reform. The draft NGO law has been drafted by NGOs with the participation of government officials and was officially submitted to the Ministry of Justice for their review. ICNL assisted with broad distribution of the text among all interested parties. In addition, ICNL provided its recommendations to the draft and organized numerous roundtable discussions of the draft with NGOs, drafters and government officials. Once it is evaluated in the Ministry, it will be submitted for Parliaments' consideration at the beginning of 2001. Another important achievement is that the Government has initiated a new law On Registration of Legal Entities. It is a key issue for legal persons in the development of civil legislation in Tajikistan since this new law will establish a single registration procedure for all legal persons operating in the Republic of Tajikistan. Q4/00.

### **Drafting of the Law "On Non-commercial Organizations" is finished and the Draft is submitted to the Government for its consideration**

The government of Tajikistan and NGO community are actively pursuing the NGO law reform. Thus, the draft NGO law has been drafted by NGOs with the participation of government officials involved in implementation of the appropriate legislation and this draft law was officially submitted to the Ministry of Justice for the legal expertise. Once it is evaluated in the Ministry, it is expected that this draft law will be submitted to Parliaments for consideration at the beginning of 2001. In general this draft law meets international standards of NGO legislation and would allow establishing a progressive regulatory environment for NGOs. Q3/00.

### **Draft Laws Submitted to Parliament: A Draft NGO Law — "On Non-commercial Organizations" And A New Draft Law on Charities**

The government of Tajikistan and NGO community is actively pursuing NGO law reform. However, the needed expertise on such a subject is hard to find. The government formed a quasi-governmental working group to address this issue. They, in turn, approached ICNL for assistance. In addition to its local partner, ICNL also sent consultants to Tajikistan to work directly on this draft and with the quasi-governmental working group. The group finished the first version of a new draft law, "*On Non-commercial Organizations*." This law meets international standards of NGO legislation and creates a progressive regime of NGO registration and regulation. The new draft law was submitted after April 1st, 2000, in the Parliament of Tajikistan. Adoption of this law will further improve Tajikistan's legislation on NGOs. ICNL has already been successful in drafting and adopting of a revised law "*On Public Associations*", new Civil Code (Parts I & II) and Tax Code. In addition, the Minister of Justice, representatives from Parliament and representatives from the President's Administration have expressed to ICNL's local partner, Muatar Khaidarova, the desire to work on further forms of legislation on foundations and unions. The desire for continued work has culminated into the creation of a quasi-governmental working group, which will include ICNL as its official consultant. This working group has begun drafting a new charity law that is expected to be adopted in Summer 2000. Q2/00.

### **Tajikistan**

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### **TURKMENISTAN**

#### **NGO Law Reform is in need**

Turkmen Government Institutions recognize the need for NGO law reforms. The National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights with the President of Turkmenistan proposed funding ICNL to support the Institutes' project with drafting the new Law on Public Associations. According to Mr. Mogilevski, Deputy Director of the Institute, this was the Presidents' request that the Institute draft such a law. ICNL sees it as an important opportunity to assist with and to insure that this law complies with international laws and good international practices of NGO regulation. By supporting this project ICNL hopes not only to come up with a progressive NGO law, but also to utilize the opportunity to educate senior level government officials involved in drafting and implementation of the NGO law. Q3/00.

## **UZBEKISTAN**

### **ICNL is Officially a Member of an Expert Group within Parliament**

An ICNL representative in Uzbekistan has been officially included into the Parliament's expert group working with the Committee on Democratic Institutions, NGOs and Self-Governance Bodies. The major scope of activity of this Committee is to develop NGO legislation. At the moment ICNL together with the members of the Committee and the expert group are working on drafting a new law on Public Associations.

ICNL provided the Committee at its request with materials and research that will help the Committee to start working on drafting the Law on Foundations.

ICNL continues to work on the implementation of the NGO Law. ICNL is in the final stage of publishing a commentary to the Law. Several governmental institutions contributed to its preparation. This would provide the Commentary with the semi-official status and make it a manual for government officials carrying registration and supervision of NGOs as well as to NGOs, which would lead to its more effective implementation.

ICNL as a member of the expert group is actively involved in monitoring of the practical implementation of NGO laws in all regions of Uzbekistan and is currently working on setting roundtables throughout the country on implementation of the Law. Q4/00.

### **The Regulatory Environment for NGOs is Changing for Better**

A year and a half passed since the new Law on Non-commercial Organizations was adopted in May 1999. Currently the National Human Rights Center is doing a research on how the Law on Non-commercial Organizations is implemented throughout the country. The results of this research and independent ICNL analysis will be presented in a new book On Comments to the Law On Non-commercial Organizations that will come out in December 2000. The important finding of this analysis is that the Law brought a positive message to local officials that the President does not prohibit and declares support to NGOs. This made a great impact on the mentality of local government officials, who currently cause much less problems with registration of NGOs than previously was the case. Nevertheless still a lot has to be done to make the implementation of the Law positive to NGOs. Q3/00.

### **ICNL Carries Out Implementation Training for Ministry Officials**

Last year, ICNL and Counterpart carried out a training series for NGOs and government officials in the implementation of the new NGO law. This training was funded by Global Training and Development and held in four different cities (Samarkand, Bukhara, Nukus and Kokand). Although these trainings were a success, it became abundantly clear that officials from the Ministry of Justice (being those that must implement the logistics of the new law) need special attention. The Ministry officials requested further ICNL assistance in the form of a specific training. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, GTD funded a training that was held in the Parliament of Uzbekistan. This training was held by ICNL and its governmental partner, the Institute of Monitoring Legislation. The training invited over 40 persons (NGO representatives and Ministry officials from around the country) and detailed specific implementation issues regarding the NGO law. Overall, the training highlighted the importance of proper implementation and placed the issue of NGO registration in the spotlight. Hopefully, this training will be the first in a series of NGO/Ministry interactions. Q2/00.

## COUNTERPART CONSORTIUM NGO SUPPORT INITIATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

As the lead organization in the \$17 million USAID-funded Counterpart Consortium NGO Support Initiative for Central Asia, Counterpart International provides broad support to local NGOs and other community stakeholders, complemented by sector-specific support from its PVO partners, including the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and Aid to Artisans (ATA). NGO Service Centers (NGOSC) in each of the capitals of all five Central Asian Republics deliver an integrated package of services, including:

- \$2.9 million grant portfolio of general support, partnership and corporate challenge grants to local NGOs managed by an integrated grant management system. To date, almost 450 small grants have leveraged more than \$350,000 in corporate contributions by U.S. and local companies;
- Training and consultations in NGO capacity building skills conducted by a cadre of more than 100 contract trainers from the staff of local NGOs. To date over 3,000 NGOs working in 15 sectors have been strengthened through access to a curriculum of 18 locally-developed training modules;
- Communications and information sharing including e-mail, Internet and database access, monthly newsletters, a resource library and an interactive web site - CANGONet;
- Satellite NGO Support Centers in 15 locations throughout the region, created in collaboration and with over \$500,000 in supplementary funding from UNHCR; and
- Constituency building for democratic reform through production and wide dissemination of videos, radio spots, newspaper articles, and newsletters highlighting progress and achievements within the NGO sector - which has produced a number of successful comprehensive multi-media campaigns.

## **COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **KAZAKHSTAN**

#### **Disabled Sports Training Curriculum Integrated into Education System in Kazakhstan**

Although there are more than 500,000 mentally disabled people within the general population of 14 million in Kazakhstan, there has been no formalized mechanism to include them in physical education. Counterpart grantee, NGO *Special Olympics Kazakhstan* was the first to develop a methodology and specialists in physical training for the disabled. For more than five years, the NGO has combined partnership with educational institutions and methodology development with promotion, through the media, of the ability of the disabled to participate in sports. As a result of these activities, two state universities in Ust-Kamenogorsk and Karaganda and the Republican Academy of Tourism and Sports in Almaty have incorporated the program into their curriculums. This means there will soon be professionals who can contribute to the further institutionalization of physical activity for the mentally disabled. Q 1/00

#### **Association of School Public Councils Advocates for its Members**

Several years ago, when it became obvious that the state could not provide adequate educational and safety conditions for children, school public councils (voluntary non-governmental organizations of parents and teachers) were formed in Kazakhstan. Department of Education officials in Almaty issued a decree to school leaders to refuse the funded services provided by the public organizations in an attempt to regulate or shut down these organizations. In response, the Association of School Councils obtained a written clarification from the government agency that oversees public organizations confirming they provide their services in accordance with their charter as an independent organization. The Association of School Councils is a Counterpart grantee, participant in Counterpart training workshops, including advocacy, and collaborated with well-known lawyers of the third sector legislation who are long-term partners of Counterpart. Q 1/00

#### **Children Practice Advocacy Skills through Public Service**

*"We the people...Project Citizen,"* implemented in a number of secondary schools by the Information and Research Center for Civic Education around Kazakhstan, encourages students to develop and implement a realistic project to help solve problems in their communities. Using skills acquired while learning more about civil society, institutions, and mechanisms to solve various problems, the students of school #73 in Almaty implemented the program "Safe Road to School" to address the growing number of traffic accidents near the school – many of which were fatal. The students contacted a number of responsible government organizations and were successful in getting footpath signs and traffic lights on all the intersections near their school. Q 1/00

#### **Social Partnership Roundtable Catalyzes Collaborative Draft Legislation**

While many meetings between government representatives and NGOs are often not productive, a recent roundtable on *"Legislator-NGO Constituency Dialogue"* held in Shimkent by Counterpart trainers and supported by AED/Global Program catalyzed concrete collaboration. As a result of this improved understanding of social partnership learned at the roundtable, the Director of the Oblast Law Department initiated a meeting with interested NGOs to develop a draft law on Local Self-Government. Follow-up meetings were held at the office of Counterpart grantee and affiliated resource center *Southern Kazakhstan Association of Lawyers (SKAL)*. Counterpart target NGOs such as *Dialogue* and *Sootechestvenik* actively participated in the meeting, submitted their suggestions and even drafted their own versions of some articles. Q 1/00

### *NGOs of Taraz Unite into the Council of Youth Organizations*

Taraz, as many other cities of Kazakhstan, suffers a high rate of crime, drug addiction and unemployment among youth. To alleviate some of these problems 14 NGOs of Taraz, many of which were trained at a number of Counterpart trainings including Association Development, decided to join forces and form the Council of Youth Organizations. Understanding the importance of collaboration with the government, they invited several representatives of government structures to join the Council. Some representatives of the new coalition now participate in working groups of the city and oblast Maslikhats, which enable them to promote their interests on the legislative level as well. Q1/00

### **NGO Holds a Successful Public Relations Campaign in Mass Media**

Many NGOs still experience problems in promoting their activities and gaining support of their constituencies through mass media. Thanks to the Counterpart-sponsored conference in Almaty in December 1999 entitled "*On the Way to Social Partnership*" Counterpart grantee *Junior Achievement* was given the opportunity to establish close relationships with leading journalists from the national press. As a result, a number of publications were created that helped the NGO conduct a monitoring of its educational programs, evaluate their effectiveness, assess the needs of teachers and students and attract attention of sponsors to projects implemented by *Junior Achievement*. Q 1/00

### **NGO's Report on Women's Status Became a Basis for a National Report**

The Feminist League's "Report on Women's Status in Kazakhstan," which was supported with Counterpart grant funding, was used as a basis for the First National Report on Implementation of the Convention on Liquidation of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Feminist League was invited by the Prime Minister to have representation at the working group for this issue. The government realized it lacked appropriate financial resources and experience in gender monitoring to adequately respond to this issue. Cooperation between the NGO and government assured the objectivity of the report. Q 1/00

### **First Steps Taken to Foster Social Partnership in Ust-Kamenogorsk**

While Counterpart has long been promoting the concept of social partnership, this type of collaboration has been slower to manifest outside of the capital area. The Ust-Kamenogorsk-based , Counterpart Affiliate Resource Center *Zubr* has been promoting collaboration among the different sectors. As a result, a department of the mayors office signed an MOU with *Zubr* to develop a joint strategic plan which includes collaborative projects involving other government agencies, business structures and NGOs. The first project has already been developed to and is focusing on the problem of drug addiction in the city. Q 1/00

### **NGOs Form Coalitions to Increase Electoral Influence**

NGOs in Kazakhstan had previously been unable to sustain efforts to form coalitions primarily due to the high level of their ambitions and lack of skills. Counterpart has been actively promoting the idea of coalition building through its advocacy training, conferences and other events. Now, NGOs are beginning to understand the importance of the notion as demonstrated by the following three examples:

- *Diabetes Society of Taraz* initiated a coalition of social NGOs in Taraz for which Counterpart conducted seminars on Social Partnership and Constituency Development. The main aim of this training was to develop the coalition's skills necessary for ensuring support of the coalition's candidates running for office on the elections to be held in October.
- Another Counterpart grantee *Pavlodar Housing Association* took a leading part in organizing a NGOs' coalition in their city, which proposed 11 candidates to different levels of the government.
- The coalition of women NGOs Women Electoral Initiatives, created after a Counterpart-supported training with the League of Women Voters, has recently registered the *Women's Electoral Bloc*. The main aim of the bloc is to support women-candidates regardless of their political affiliation. Q 4/99



### **Jelly Jam Environmental Program Continues to Change Education in Kazakhstan**

The Jelly Jam program of ecological education for children was introduced in Kazakhstan for the first time two years ago with the support of Counterpart Consortium and Chevron Munaigas Inc. As a result of attendance at this event, NGO *Kausar* in Astana organized an initiative group of teachers that has successfully conducted the first classroom trial of the Kazakh version of the book in several schools and kindergartens. As a result of this experience, there was increased interest on the part of teachers and local education officials to learn how to use the curriculum and offer it in more schools in and around Astana. The NGO has received permission from the US creator of the curriculum to conduct a training of trainers (TOT) that included NGO leaders, teachers and government officials. As a result of this TOT, Jelly Jam is becoming an integral part of the municipal educational program *Education of the Capital* in Astana. Q 4/99

### **National Association of Consumers' Rights Protection Societies doubles its Membership**

The grant awarded by Counterpart Consortium to the National Association of Consumers' Rights Protection Societies was aimed at strengthening the capacity and increasing the membership of this NGO. Here are a few results of this successful project:

- The number of members of the Association doubled from 8 to 16
- The number of calls to the *hotline* provided by the organization increased dramatically to 800 calls per quarter, indicating an increase in consumers' activity and awareness in protecting their rights.
- Several commercial structures contracted with the NGO to help them improve product quality to avoid future consumer complaints. Q 4/99

### **NGO Included on Ministry Public Advisory Board**

In December 1999, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection convened a Public Advisory Board to encourage greater involvement of citizens in the process of decision-making in the social sphere. Because of their visibility and success as an active advocate and NGO, the Stepnogorsk-based pensioners' movement *Pokolenie* is one of a few other NGOs invited to sit on this board. *Pokolenie* is a Counterpart grantee and recipient of concentrated training and technical assistance from the Counterpart Astana NGO Support Center. Q 4/99

### **Pokolenie Movement Becomes an Association**

The pensioners' movement *Pokolenie* has achieved great results in protecting its constituency, some of which have previously been reported by Counterpart, and has become one of the most visible and well-known NGOs in Kazakhstan. Counterpart supported this NGO by giving four grants and training its representatives in various aspects of organizational development around the republic. As a result of this, *Pokolenie* has reviewed its organizational structure and recently has completed the official registration process as the *Association of Movements of Social and Legal Protection of Pensioners of the Republic of Kazakhstan*. The association consists of 22 registered members. The association structure helps to formalize the former unofficial participants of the movement and gives them a real opportunity to represent interests of the whole network. Q 4/99

### **Special Olympics Receives a Grant from its Central Office**

*Special Olympics of Kazakhstan* has recently celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This event was marked by a grant awarded by the Central Office of Special Olympics International (SOI) in amount of \$100,000. The main requirement of the SOI for the grant was a strong working system of the NGO's branches. Special Olympics together with Counterpart developed and conducted a series of organizational development training in various regions of Kazakhstan in which it had its branches. A group of the SOI experts was impressed by the work done and by the progress of *Special Olympics* development, as a result of Counterpart assistance. Q 4/99

### **Member of NGO Support Center Network Develops Grant-making Capacity through Partnership**

Many Kazakhstani NGOs strive for grants from different donor organizations, as they still remain the primary source of funding. Going beyond this situation, Counterpart grantee and affiliated resource center *EcoCenter of Karaganda*, started a partnership project with the Center for Safe Energy (California, USA-) which includes distribution of mini-grants (\$500–\$2000) to NGOs and initiative groups. The project entitled *US/Kazakhstan Women's Leadership Grant Program for NGOs* is sponsored by the US State Department and is aimed at supporting women's grassroots initiatives in Kazakhstan. It consists of two parts – special training on Project Design for women's groups and a grant program. *EcoCenter* not only used the Counterpart training module in *Project Design* for the first phase of their program but also successfully used the resource center's network to collect the participants and grant projects from all the regions of Kazakhstan. Q 4/99

### **Environmental Management System for Karaganda Region Results from Social Partnership**

Karaganda local government (oblast akimat) and the Counterpart Affiliated NGO Support Center *EcoCenter* became one of the two first grantees of the EcoLinks program in Kazakhstan. They were awarded with the \$5,000 Quick Response Award which was used for travel to the US Partner Eurasia Environmental Associates. As a result of this trip, the three organizations developed a plan for long-term cooperation in environmental field and developed a larger scale project to create an Environmental Management System for Karaganda region in Kazakhstan, which has recently been awarded an additional \$50,000 in grant funding. Q 4/99

### **NGO Contracted by Government to Build Capacity in Project Design**

The Eastern Kazakhstan region suffers from multiple ecological problems. Although financial resources are provided by the state to solve the problems there are no organizations with the capacity to develop effective solutions. For the first time, a large government agency, Eastern Kazakhstan Oblast Nature Protection Fund cooperated with a local NGO to improve the situation. The training, entitled *Project Design for Attracting Funds for Nature Protection Projects*, was conducted in three towns for 80 representatives of 57 government structures by the Ust-Kamenogorsk-based Consulting Center *Zubr*, an affiliate of the Counterpart NGO Support Center Network. Q 4/99

### **Baspana NGO Successfully Advocates the Rights of Dormitory' Tenants in Kazakhstan**

Dormitories owned by the state have been the only available type of accommodation for many people with low income. *Baspana* specializes in advocating for the rights of the homeless and has successfully implemented a lobbying strategy to address the rights of individuals forced out of their homes and into dormitories. By practicing new skills and techniques in advocacy and social partnership learned from Counterpart training, the NGO has written appeals to the President, Parliament, and the Prime Minister. They organized a conference on "NGO and Government's Involvement in the Problem Solving for Homeless People". Their efforts resulted in adoption of a law that approves privatization of dormitories' rooms by their constant residents. Moreover, representatives of *Baspana* were included in an Expert Committee on Human Rights working under the President of Kazakhstan, which gives them an opportunity to advocate the rights of homeless people at the highest level. Q 3/99

### **Partnership Efforts Increase International Awareness in Kazakh Art**

The international community has had little exposure to achievements of Kazakhstan artists. The first exhibition of works of artists from Kazakhstan in the USA was organized by Kazakhstan government and went almost unnoticed. With funding from Counterpart, the Bridge Association from Kazakhstan and its US partner, the Central Asian Cultural Exchange, organized the second exhibition, which received enormous acclaim from international art experts and media and resulted in several partnership projects. Q 3/99

### **Women's Coalition Raises \$150,000 for Conference Supporting Women Candidates and Leadership Initiatives in Kazakhstan**

More than 2,000 women participated in the first Kazakhstan Women's Fair of Goods and Ideas, which was organized by the Business Women's Association of Kazakhstan (BWA) and held in Almaty from August 26-29. The goal of the event was to encourage women to network and collaborate and to build support for women leaders running for office in October. Event preparation began almost a year ago with a specially tailored Fundraising training workshop offered by Counterpart to assist in developing a fundraising strategy and creating a coalition of women's group to launch the fundraising campaign to make the event possible. As a result, \$150,000 was raised from a number of corporate and foundation donors, including Chevron, Tengizchevroil, Nursat, and other international funds and agencies, as well as other leading international and Kazakhstani companies. Co-sponsors included the UNDP Gender Bureau, Sweden International Development Department (SIDA), and the President of Kazakhstan's National Committee on Family and Women's Issues. Q 3/99

### **Kazakhstan Target NGO Fosters Affiliates and Other NGOs in Their Community**

Counterpart has successfully developed the capacity of its target NGOs in many spheres including conducting training, consulting on project design and fundraising. This enables them to become umbrella organizations for other NGOs in their regions. For example, the Kiwanis Club of Taraz continues to replicate the model developed by Kiwanis Club International and recently helped to register subdivisions, Key Club and Kiwajunior, both targeting youth involvement in civic leadership. With training from the Kiwanis Club of Taraz, which also serves as a Counterpart NGO Support Center, these organizations have already been successful in fundraising and program design. The Key Club received \$450 from UNDP for a project to raise public awareness about soil degradation. Kiwajunior received \$1,800 from Mercy Corps to organize a summer camp for its members. Q 3/99

### **NGO Insures Regular Attention to its Needs from Local Government**

Collaboration with local government at the implementation level is required to address many of the issues facing Housing Associations. Encouraged by the idea of social partnership promoted by Counterpart and having received the grant to strengthen its advocacy skills, the Pavlodar Housing Association (PHA) is now holding weekly meetings with City officials, including the Deputy Mayor for Housing Services to address numerous members' concerns including economic benefits, professional development, improvement of the public services' legislation. Improvements in the system of housing provision and better-informed participation in the housing reform are a few benefits received both by the PHA and Pavlodar governmental authorities from this cooperation. Q 3/99

### **NGO Leaders Increasingly Acknowledged with Membership on National Advisory Bodies**

Recently representatives of two Kazakhstani NGOs, Counterpart grantees and participants in Counterpart trainings, have been included in a state committee and a working group functioning under the government of Kazakhstan. This success illustrates that NGOs are not only gaining credibility and acceptance among government officials, but are also becoming key players in the decision-making process.

- The Director of *Sheber Aul*, a long time partner of ATA, was invited to sit on the Committee on Development of Small Businesses under the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Activities of this NGO aimed at advocating for the rights of artisans convinced the government of the importance of supporting and developing traditional crafts for the Kazakhstan economy.
- The Executive Director of the *Feminist League* has become a member of the State Working Group on Preparing the Report on the Realization of the Convention about Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This is the first time that such a report will be prepared by Kazakhstan. Expertise earned by this NGO through the preparation of the Report on the Status of Women supported by Counterpart insured its inclusion into this expert board. Q 3/99

### **Ministry of State Income Cooperates with NGO to Combat Tax Illiteracy**

Ignorance of the population on tax issues is a major factor in difficulties faced by the state and citizens of Kazakhstan. To alleviate this problem the Ministry of State Income and Legal-Info Company cooperated with Almaty NGO *Tax Standards Formation Fund (TSFF)* to distribute free copies of a CD containing a comprehensive tax legislation and information database which are planned to be sold in future. TSFF successfully used skills and techniques in organizing of informational campaigns gained at Counterpart Public Education through Mass Media training and immediately attracted attention of citizens, NGOs, business and state structures to this promotion campaign. Q 3/99

### **National Housing Association Strengthens Ties with the National Antimonopoly Committee**

Regular partnership contacts encouraged by Counterpart between the National Housing Association and the National Antimonopoly Committee recently resulted in the signing of a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding. Formalizing this social partnership has already resulted in the inclusion of four Association representatives on the National Committee for Housing Reform. In addition, through participation in an Antimonopoly Committee public hearing on utility tariffs, the Association successfully advocated for a three-month extension of the existing freeze on tariff hikes. Both achievements represent priority concerns of Association members in Kazakhstan. Q 3/99

### **Committee of Soldiers' Mothers Arranges Jobs for Ex-Servicemen in Kazakhstan**

A recent survey conducted by the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers shows that only 5% of 13,000 ex-servicemen furloughed last year in the Almaty region have since found employment. To respond to the problem, the Committee decided to broaden the scope of its activity and has opened a carpenter workshop to provide ex-servicemen with marketable job skills. As a result of improved fundraising and strategic planning skills gained at Counterpart training workshops, the Committee secured local private sector sponsorship to obtain a building and five major pieces of equipment. These same corporate supporters have committed to hiring graduates of the training program. Q 2/99

### **Kazakhstan Human Rights NGO Leader Invited to Brief U.S. Congress**

On May 6, 1999 the United States invited Counterpart grantee Evgeny Zhovtis, Director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights and the Rule of Law to provide a briefing at an open hearing about the deterioration of democracy in Kazakhstan. With a Counterpart grant received in 1997, the NGO has become a leading voice for Kazakstani human rights. Zhovtis has gained international recognition as an outspoken human rights advocate and a highly qualified human rights monitor. In addition to these recent Congress hearings, he has been engaged in several international human rights projects including ones sponsored by the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Q 2/99

### **Advocacy and Public Awareness Campaign Benefits Victims of Stalinist Repression**

Many GULAG camps established to house victims of Stalinist repression were located in Kazakhstan and many former prisoners were released to become permanent residents. Therefore, the community of victims of political persecution is particularly large, and advocacy for their rights is an issue of concern. In 1998 Counterpart awarded a grant to the Astana Association of Victims of Political Repression (AVPR) to advocate for the rights of this group through a public information campaign. As a result, AVPR has established a coalition of similar associations from other Kazakhstan cities, that has successfully lobbied for amendments to Kazakhstani legislation mandating monthly support payments for victims of communist era repression. In addition, AVPR is raising awareness of the crimes of the Stalinist regime by involving government officials in public events commemorating Memorial Day. Q 2/99

### **Kazakhstan Pensioner Association Engages Local Government in Utility Policy Reform**

In 1998, *Pokolenie* Pensioner Association installed 60 water meters in random pensioner families to prove that the official rate of water usage was overstated. Based on this research, they successfully advocated for a temporary freeze of utility rates. Continuing to expand upon this project funded with a Counterpart grant, *Pokolenie* has successfully used Counterpart fundraising techniques to obtain almost 3,000 additional water meters from the Almaty Hakim (mayor) and the company that provides water to the city. This project is helping pensioners reduce their water bills by almost 50%. Based on the success of this project, *Pokolenie* has received Soros Foundation grant to replicate the project targeting gas usage. Q 2/99

### **Leading Kazakhstan Environmental NGO Awarded Government Contract to Monitor Vehicle Emissions**

The Governor of Eastern Kazakhstan Oblast has recently undertaken several measures aimed at strengthening regulation of air pollution in Ust-Kamenogorsk, a major industrial city. Counterpart grantee Green Party, a high profile environmental NGO, has been awarded a social contract by the governor's office to monitor vehicle emissions as part of the campaign to reduce emission of air pollutants. Q 2/99

### **Housing Association and City Government Collaborate to Improve Contract Service Delivery**

Providing housing services has traditionally been the sole realm of the state. As the result, the quality of services provided was poor and there was no mechanism in place to improve them. After the collapse of the state run utility system, the situation became even worse as government quality control ceased. In 1998 and 1999, Counterpart grantee the Almaty Housing Cooperatives Association, together with the City Administration Antimonopoly Committee successfully held a series of tenders for contracts on garbage removal, maintenance of elevators, and water meter installation. It is believed that these competitive bid tenders will encourage competition among utility providers and will increase the quality of service. Q 2/99

### **NGO Leads First Earth Day Celebration in Highly Polluted Eastern Kazakhstan City**

For the first time, 15 NGOs of Leninogorsk, an industrial city of eastern Kazakhstan, joined forces to celebrate International Earth Day. The Mayor's office and other local government agencies supported this initiative. A Counterpart grantee in this city, the ecological NGO *Beloyodye-1*, initiated and led this five-day environmental campaign, aimed at raising ecological awareness. The principal event of this campaign was the first ever city children's ecological parade. Q2/99

### **Social Entrepreneurship Generates Recognition and Income for Kazakhstan NGO**

Developing diversified funding sources for financial sustainability is still the major challenge facing most NGOs in Kazakhstan. The Kiwanis Club of Taraz, a Counterpart grantee developed a business plan for building an entertainment theme park on the outskirts of the city in a former unofficial garbage dump. Using fundraising skills learned at Counterpart trainings, NGO leaders successfully approached the Oblast Akimat and one commercial company with their plan to form an implementing Consortium. In June 1999, the Taraz AquaPark opened and has already started to generate modest monthly revenue for the Taraz Kiwanis Club. Q 2/99

### **Kazakhstan NGO Trains Entrepreneurs to Access Micro-Credit Funds**

Many potential borrowers among the low-income population have no access to the state run micro-credit program because of the lack of information and skills to develop a good business plan. Tekely Business Advisory Center from a small town near Taldykorgan received a grant from Counterpart for seminars to teach low-income population how to apply for a micro-loan. As a result of these seminars conducted in cooperation with a local Akimat a group of 14 participants have developed successful business plans and received credits from a government run micro-credit program to the total amount of 420,000 tenge. Q 2/99

**NGO Wins Government Contract to Provide Services to the Hearing Impaired**

Counterpart grantee SATR (Social Adaptation & Labor Rehabilitation for Mentally and Physically Disabled Children) has been awarded a very competitive social contract from the Kazakhstan Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to produce and fit hearing aids. In past years, such collaboration between government and non-government sectors in manufacturing or delivering goods and services was unthinkable. Counterpart has been encouraging such "social partnership" arrangements among its grantees both for their potential in helping groups achieve financial sustainability and for their value in creating institutional credibility in the community. SATR's achievement, enabled by the high quality of goods produced in their workshop together with their program of training for deaf people, is an important social partnership milestone. Q 1/99

***Consumers Advocate Leads Efforts to Amend Consumers' Rights Law***

Kazakhstan was the first in Central Asia to adopt a Law on Protection of Consumers' Rights in 1991. It has become clear with recent experience of applying the law that there are many gaps. Last summer, Counterpart grantee *Consumers Advocate*, an Astana-based NGO, organized a working group of Kazakhstani consumer NGOs to draft amendments to the law. After considerable lobbying efforts, *Consumers Advocate* secured the inclusion of the amendments on the docket of laws to be reviewed by the Lower House of Parliament in March. Q 1/99

**Business Women's Association Secures Corporate Support for Internet Access and Training**

Internet access is still inaccessible for most Kazakhstani NGOs because of high set-up costs and monthly charges. With skills learned through participation in a range of Counterpart programs, including grant support, the Almaty Business Women's Association (BWA) successfully approached Nursat, a leading Internet provider in Kazakhstan, for free Internet access. BWA operates one of the most effective training/job placement programs for unemployed women in the city. As a result of the contribution from the company Nursat, BWA has started to provide Internet skills to its women trainees and opened a BWA web page. Q 1/99

**Kazakhstan Housing Association Engages Membership and Government in Advocacy Efforts**

Astana-based National Federation of Housing Associations used recent property managers training to strengthen member ties to government agencies and advocate for stronger inclusion of membership interests in government policymaking forums. As a result of the Chairman's attendance at the Association's training, the National Antimonopoly Committee established an expert panel to recommend changes to property regulation and housing legislation including two representatives of the National Federation. Seminar participants representing 11 oblast and city housing associations wrote a letter to President Nazarbaev outlining proposed housing policy reforms. Q 1/99

**Kazakhstan Pension Fund Association Defends Legislative Mandate for Financial Sustainability**

The Kazakhstan Senate recently proposed the elimination of the 1% transaction fee for all pension fund transactions. This fee is critical to the financial sustainability of the members of the Association of Pension Funds, which relies on these fees to help insure financial sustainability. Testimony by Association leadership before the lower House of Parliament resulted in rejection of the senate proposal to eliminate the fee. The testimony was supported by a lobbying campaign, also launched by the Association. The skills critical to the success of this effort were honed through previous advocacy efforts supported by Counterpart grant funding. Q 1/99

**Course in Human Rights has been included in the curriculum of the State University.**

For the first time a course in Human Rights has been included in the curriculum of an institute of higher education in Kazakhstan -- the State University of International Relations and World Languages (Almaty). It is a result of participation of some of its staff members in a seminar held by a Counterpart grantee - Center for Conflict Management. Representatives of the Center for Conflict Management not only assisted the staff of the University with development of the education program on Human Rights, but in partnership with the University of International Relationship and Slavic University published a manual *Main Human Rights' International Documents: Materials and Comments* (2000 copies). Q 1/99

**Consumers' Rights Case Studies Developed and Distributed**

After hosting a series of seminars last summer to discuss issues related to the application of laws and regulations pertaining to consumers' rights, *Consumers Advocate* published and disseminated manuals documenting case studies with comments and recommendations. The publication of these manuals marks the first attempt in Kazakhstan to summarize the valuable practical experience of more than 10 consumer groups and share legal techniques of consumer rights activity with other consumer activists and interested parties. Q 1/99

**Women's NGOs form a Coalition to Strengthen Fundraising Efforts**

An informal group of women's NGOs, including two counterpart target groups and grantees, requested Counterpart assistance in developing a fundraising strategy to generate support for an event to be held with a Swedish partner. Counterpart organized a specially tailored training, which resulted in a fundraising strategy and the formation of a coalition of women's groups. Q 4/98

**Path-breaking Step toward Reform of Kazakhstan NGO Laws**

With a \$20,000 partnership grant from Counterpart, the Association of Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations of Kazakhstan (ANNOK) , ICNL and UNDP, held a conference entitled "Cooperation Between NGOs and Government; the Development of Civil Society and the Legislative Base for NGOs" this October in Astana. The conference gave local NGOs a unique chance to voice their opinion on NGO legislation and raise issues concerning a need to start effective multi-sided cooperation between NGOs and government bodies in a collaborative setting involving a number of top governmental officials. The result was a series of written resolutions supported by both NGOs and government. They include a resolution to develop NGO legislation for consideration by Parliament within the year. Q 4/98

**Pavlodar Government Officials Request Training and Assistance**

As a result of on-going contact between government officials and NGOs facilitated by Counterpart staff, the governor of Pavlodar region requested specially tailored training for a cadre of regional governmental officials spanning 12 different departments and agencies. The training focused on Public Education Through Mass Media and included practical information about the role of NGOs in civil society and approaches to collaboration. This opportunity to break down stereotypes and explore collaborative approaches builds on the success of the recent Social Partnership Conference held in September 1998. Pavlodar is a Counterpart target city. Q 4/98

**Partnership Spurs Women to Advocate Changes in Party Platforms for National Elections**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado and two Almaty NGOs - the Feminist League and Center for Democracy Education 'Leader' - partnered to adapt the League model for political involvement to the Kazakhstan context. With new skills developed through a Counterpart partnership grant, a group of leading Almaty women's NGOs held a press conference for local and international media to present recommendations for the political platforms of candidates running in upcoming January 1999 presidential elections. Their demands included issues of women's legal rights and the status of women in Kazakhstan. In particular, they proposed a series of laws needed to protect women's rights and asked for affirmative action measures, such as a 30 percent quota for women in the legislative and executive branches of national and local governments. Q 4/98

### **Social Contracting of Government Services to NGOs Increases**

Government contracting with NGOs for provision of services – social contracting – is one model for positive collaboration between government and NGOs identified at the recent Counterpart Consortium Regional Social Partnership Conference held in September 1998. Following are three new examples of NGOs that are now providing services to government. All three are Counterpart grantees and active participants in a range of Counterpart Consortium NGO support programs.

- The Diabetes Society of Taras is implementing several successful programs to deliver services and advocate for the rights of their members. Due to the public recognition their success gained, the local Department of Health Care has awarded a contract to the NGO to distribute foreign donated humanitarian aid specifically to diabetics. Humanitarian aid distribution program will be done in cooperation with government Endocrinology Center in Taraz city and Dzambul oblast during 1999.
- The Center for Civic Initiatives (CCI) has recently reached an agreement with the Ministry of Social Protection to conduct a series seminars and public discussions on pensioners reform, to be held throughout Kazakhstan to educate pensioners and major employers about on-going pension reform. CCI has also been awarded a contract by the Ministry of Information and Public Accord (MIPA) to conduct a series of seminars on conflict resolution in several rural areas across the country.
- The Kiwanis Club of Taraz has won a government tender to train local family doctors in management and business administration. The competition for this tender included a local university and other respected local organizations. Articles in local newspapers about the training credited the Club's participatory methodology, learned through Counterpart Consortium, as a reason for their success. Q 4/98

### **NGO Helps Retirees Use Kazakhstani Legal System to Secure Mandated Pensions**

Pension and salary payment delays are common in Kazakhstan, where the social safety net is strained by economic problems. Up to 18,000 lawsuits have been brought by Kazakhstani pensioners, who often times have no other source of income, against local social service agencies and local governments that are delinquent in providing services for which they are responsible. Only two such cases have been won to date. Both cases were brought by Counterpart grantee *Pokolenie*, located in the northern city of Stepnogorsk. Counterpart has supported this group with a grant of \$4,525, technical assistance and training. Q 4/98

### **Creative Advocacy Approach Results in Freeze of Utility Rate Increases in Almaty**

NGO *Pokolenie* members identified rapidly increasing utility prices as a priority problem. Informal research indicated that customers, including pensioners, were being routinely over-charged. This summer, during the hottest months of the year, *Pokolenie* monitored actual water use with meters purchased with a Counterpart Consortium grant. The resulting data delivered strong proof that Tractebel, a Belgian utility conglomerate that operates Almaty's electricity, heating, water and gas systems, was charging nearly twice the actual usage. *Pokolenie* launched a mass media campaign reporting their findings and calling for a utility rate freeze until meters can be installed on a wider scale to allow for billing based on actual usage. Media coverage generated by *Pokolenie* generated strong public pressure against Tractebel and as a result, pensioner's rates have been frozen and Tractebel is under investigation. Q 3/98

### **Consumer Groups to Monitor Antimonopoly Committee Resolutions**

The area of Kazakhstan surrounding the new capital city, Astana, is geographically isolated and has not had adequate access to training tailored to the specific needs of consumers. *Consumer Advocate* of Astana organized a series of workshops in government relations for 16 consumer groups of North and Central Kazakhstan with grant funding from Counterpart Consortium. The participating NGOs then successfully lobbied the head of the Anti-Monopoly Committee to create an Advisory Council composed of consumer NGO representatives. The Council will review every new law for its impact on consumers and provide advice to the Committee. Q 3/98



### **Grassroots Curriculum Helps Children Become Advocates for Environmental Protection**

Two years ago, with the help of a Corporate Challenge Grant with Chevron Munaigas, ecological education booklets featuring a puppet called Jelly Jam were distributed among a group of Kazakhstan teachers of English in local primary schools. Jelly Jam, which is the creation of American ecology activist, Judi Friedman, has been used successfully in a number of cultures to encourage conservation and preservation of the environment. The booklets were rarely used in Kazakhstan, however, because teachers were not clear on how to present them. In August, with a Corporate Challenge grant from Counterpart, assistance from USAID's Global Training program, and support from Chevron, Ms. Friedman came to Kazakhstan to present a five-day seminar for 16 teachers representing all oblasts of Kazakhstan and six leaders of local NGOs. The Training of Trainers format means that there will be trained proponents of the Jelly Jam methodology throughout the country and that NGOs as well as schools will be involved. The success of the workshop resulted in a request by the Ministry of Education to produce Jelly Jam teacher training materials in the Kazakh Language. Q 3/98

### **Government Models National Education Program after Junior Achievement Training**

Junior Achievement (JA), a Counterpart Consortium grantee, has adapted an integrated applied economics curriculum for use in Kazakhstan and has already trained 2,000 teachers in content and methodology. Since 1995, more than 100,000 children throughout Kazakhstan have participated in this proven program. Due to the success of JA programs, the Ministry of Education has formalized the inclusion of two JA courses in the official curriculum for 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> forms throughout the country. Q3/98

### **Innovative Member Service Generates Income and Gains Government Support**

Counterpart training helped the Taraz-based "Diabet" society establish win-win relations with local administration. This summer, using skills acquired at Counterpart training, "Diabet" successfully negotiated with the local government for a large, central located office space in a government building, which is in short supply and great demand in smaller cities throughout Kazakhstan. The Counterpart seminar on Financial Sustainability helped "Diabet" develop a service delivery program that local officials valued enough to provide space in which to house it. Diabet has established a commercial subsidiary that sells specialized foods to diabetics and uses the proceeds to help fund the organization and pay salaries to doctors who specialize in diabetes. Q 3/98

### **NGO Collaboration Furthers Parent Involvement in Disability Rights**

Two Counterpart grantees, *Umit* and *Society ZHAN*, an NGO which specializes in legal protection of disabled children and their families, developed a series of one-day seminars for deaf children and their parents on the issue of legal rights for disabled people, particularly deaf children. They focused on Kazakh and international laws ratified by the Kazakh parliament. The seminars were organized on behalf of the Almaty Boarding School for Deaf Children and were the first of their kind conducted in Kazakhstan. They not only informed deaf children and their parents to their rights, but also, using the case study method, taught the methodology of disabled children's rights protection. The seminars will continue monthly from mid-summer 1998 to spring 1999 and will be accompanied by a monthly bulletin on relevant topics. Q 3/98

### **Eco-Project, Almaty**

Public service announcements are still a new and under-utilized approach in Kazakhstan. To raise public awareness about ecological problems, the Almaty-based NGO "Eco-Project," set up by a group of young journalists and specialists in environmental problems, prepared a series of videos to raise public awareness about ecological problems with grant support from Counterpart Consortium. Topics include water use, desertification, ozone layer and atmosphere preservation, uncontrolled use of chemicals in industrial production and other topics of public concern. These professional quality videos, broadcast on local state and commercial television channels, are generating increased public awareness of the need for rational use of decreasing natural resources and of the dangers of uncontrolled industrialization in Kazakhstan. Q2/98

### **Newly Formed NGO Coalition Focuses on Advocacy for NGO Legal Reform**

Numerous past attempts on the part of individual Kazakhstani NGOs to lobby for improved NGO legislation have not been successful because they lacked the support of the entire NGO community and were not equipped, professionally or organizationally, to implement such a comprehensive project. After participation in Counterpart Consortium's Association Development Training, the Association of Non-governmental, Non-commercial Organizations of Kazakhstan (ANNOK), a newly formed NGO umbrella organization, requested tailored follow-up training in strategic planning for their board of directors. ANNOK then refocused their mission on lobbying efforts and developed a collaborative project with Consortium partner, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). The resulting project, funded through a support grant from Counterpart, combines ICNL's knowledge of international law with ANNOK's NGO network and government contacts to organize NGOs in support of an improved Law on Charitable Organizations to be drafted by a working group including parliament deputies, ICNL, UNDP, and Kazakhstani NGOs. Q2/98

### **Housing Reform Movement Revived in Atyrau**

Many past Atyrau Housing Association efforts to play a more active role in advocating on behalf of their members have had little result due to lack of professional experience and weak ties with the public and the local government. Many buildings that should be managed by the associations are in complete disrepair and still under the control of local government. In an effort to bolster dialog between the local government, mass media, and housing cooperatives and associations, Counterpart held a five-day specially designed training module for housing cooperatives and associations from five cities in western Kazakhstan, including Atyrau. By the end of the seminar, several important resolutions were made, including that the housing associations would be included in all commissions and meetings discussing public utilities tariffs. The associations also plan to work more effectively with the media to demand a discussion on tariff hikes and develop a better informed and actively engaged public. Q2/98

### **Expansion of Network of Business Women Associations (BWA) Across Kazakhstan**

NGO sectoral networking is still rare in Kazakhstan. Even the most successful NGOs must concentrate on their immediate goals of trying to survive in the transitional period. BWA Almaty attendance at Counterpart training helped them acquire the skills necessary to set up the first Business Women's Association in Kazakhstan. However, their success wasn't spreading to other Kazakh cities. Working in partnership with Counterpart Consortium, BWA developed an outreach strategy to foster creation of similar BWA chapters across the country, which included participation in Counterpart training and a tailor-made technical assistance plan for leadership of potential new chapters. BWA chapters have now formed in several Kazakh cities and are collaborating with each other in a network to foster a collaborative environment for the development of women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan. Q2/98

### **Results-Oriented Engagement of Local Government**

Throughout Kazakhstan and especially in Almaty, local government is uninformed about citizen's problems and the citizens themselves are unaware of how to engender government collaboration in achieving grassroots solutions. Counterpart grantee Equal to Equal is mobilizing citizen-government collaboration through creative, results-oriented approaches learned through participation in Counterpart training and technical assistance programs. Capitalizing on the Soviet tradition of volunteerism, this Almaty-based NGO organized a community park clean up, which resulted in public acknowledgement from the Deputy Mayor of the city, whose offices provided transportation and equipment for the project. The Deputy Mayor also conveyed permanent authority for the park's maintenance and use to the local NGO community, dramatically increasing the visibility of their community leadership and contributions. Q2/98

### **Curriculum Reform Results in Inclusion of Human Rights Courses in High Schools**

With initial grant support from Counterpart, the Conflict Resolution Center (CRC) developed and implemented the first nationwide human rights education program for high schools in Kazakhstan. In several seminars, a group of high school teachers representing all 14 oblasts has been trained and provided with methodological materials to launch human rights programs in their schools. This project was co-funded by EU TACIS and supported by Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan, making it an excellent example of donor coordination and leveraging. Counterpart support is leveraged by a TACIS grant of \$137,577 given jointly to CRC and its partner NGO in Russia. Q2/98

### **National Consumer Protection Association Established in Kazakhstan**

After participating in a number of Counterpart's training workshops, 12 consumer groups, including two former rivals from Almaty, established the National Association of Consumer Groups, providing a forum and mechanism for sectoral collaboration across the country. In November 1997, a grant from Counterpart Consortium helped the Association develop a series of 15 informational booklets covering issues of local consumer rights legislation, case studies on implementation of these laws and other issues of public concern. The series, distributed free to Association members and their constituencies, addresses the lack of legal and methodological literature about consumer rights in Kazakhstan. Q2/98

### **Developing Local Skill in Public Opinion Polling and Democracy Research**

The BRIF Agency, a Kazakhstani NGO dedicated to public opinion polling, fills a service gap by providing current, accurate and relevant data for socio-political analysis. A Counterpart Consortium Support Grant in 1996 enabled BRIF to computerize their research and strengthen a database. With other training and technical assistance support from Counterpart, BRIF has developed the capacity to gauge public awareness of NGOs role in society and general political awareness in a poll commissioned by USAID. Used by both international and local organizations as a measure of impact toward USAID Strategic Objectives and as baseline data from which to develop new programs and measure future impact, BRIF is quantifying the development of civil society in Kazakhstan. Q2/98

### **Partnership Linkages Provide Models to Strengthen Civic Education in Kazakhstan**

In 1996, Young Leaders Association (YLA) director Natalija Bakhmutova participated in the USAID-funded Academy for Educational Development (AED) Global Training in Development (GTD) Leadership Development Program, organized by Counterpart International. While in the US, YLA staff established linkages with various American civic education groups and strengthened their on-going civics education programs. Leveraging skills in proposal writing developed through participation in Counterpart training, YLA has expanded partnership with two US civics education organizations (Close Up Foundation and Street Law) funded by the Open Society Institute. In addition, YLA is also translating and distributing civic education materials into Kazakh with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy. Q2/98

### **Consumer Rights and Legal Education Increased through NGOs Consumer School**

A lack of legal knowledge and an understanding of how to redress individual infractions complicate an alarming number of consumer rights violations in Kazakhstan. A \$6,235 grant from Counterpart in 12/97 assisted Taldykorgan's Contact Consumer Protection Society in establishing a resource center and "consumer school" to educate an initial target population of 1500 local residents. 250 of the targeted 1500 citizens have already completed the training. Because it is nearly impossible to actually obtain a cash settlement in court due to the financial instability of local businesses, helping consumers defend their rights up-front, before they need to file a complaint, is a valued service. Q1/98

### **Leading Youth NGO Develops Young Leaders and Student Government Associations**

Two former Counterpart contract trainers applied their skills to help organize the Young Leaders Association (YLA) in Almaty. The mission of this dynamic organization is to develop democratic alternatives to collapsed Soviet youth organizations. In 1997 alone, YLA Leadership Programs have conveyed team-building skills, conflict resolution techniques, personal time management, leadership skills, and effective communication to 550 young leaders from throughout Central Asia. Founded on newly acquired leadership skills, democratically elected student government associations and several ecological clubs have been formed in a number of schools. Q1/98

### **Benefit Concert "Rock Against Narcotics" Raises Funds and Awareness of Drug Addiction**

The rate of drug addiction among youth is particularly high in Kostanai, an industrial city with extremely high unemployment rates near the Russian border. A group of local doctors, already committed to addressing this problem with a public education campaign, has been strengthened by participation in Counterpart training programs. With Counterpart grant support, Public Fund Help has organized several highly successful anti-narcotics city events – with strong support from local media and city government. A benefit concert - "Rock against Narcotics" - was attended by more than 600 city youth and raised funds to cover the cost of the next concert and the development of a series of public service announcements. Q1/98

### **1,100 Entitlement Lawsuits Won through NGO Training and Legal Consulting Program**

In May 1997, Center for Citizen Initiatives (CCI), conducted a seminar entitled "How to Assert Your Rights" to address high legal illiteracy rates and lack of information in Kentau. As a direct result of this Counterpart funded seminar and subsequent legal consultations provided by CCI's resident lawyer in Kentau, 1,200 lawsuits were submitted to court by single mothers and state-employed workers who hadn't received their state assistance payments and/or salaries. 1,100 of the lawsuits were won, but by March 1998, only 150 plaintiffs have received compensation, due to the local government's budgetary constraints. However, several women participating in this lawsuit later went on to form an active NGO called Women's Initiative. CCI is providing consultation in the registration process. Q1/98

### **Lobbying Efforts Result in Government Support for Oblast Consumer Association**

The Aktyubinsk Consumer Rights Protection Society (ADAL) is a strong grassroots NGO organizing community action groups for constructive government engagement. In collaboration with the Oblast Consumers Union, ADAL successfully lobbied the oblast Governor and the Anti-Monopoly Committee to attain a decree promising support for the establishment of five district level consumer associations throughout the oblast. The project not only addresses the information vacuum in the districts – many of which are ecological disaster areas – but also engages the oblast government in resolving urgent issues in neglected areas. According to ADAL leadership, Counterpart training provided not only the requisite lobbying skills, but also the necessary legitimacy and credibility to effectively engage government by providing grant funding. As a result of their collaborative efforts, ADAL and the Aktyubinsk Oblast Consumers Union have developed a joint project to continue their collaboration. Q1/98

### **Drug Use and STD Awareness Increased Through Youth Peer Counseling**

In the major cities of Kazakhstan, the past few years have seen an enormous jump in the rates of drug use by young people and sexually-transmitted diseases (STD's) - especially AIDS. Equal to Equal was formed to address this need by developing a peer training program (funded by USAID through Counterpart in 10/97) focusing on the dangers of STD's and drug use and how to avoid both. The \$5,000 grant has resulted in the development of a cadre of 60 high school and university student peer trainers, that has already held seminars for over 250 young people throughout Kazakhstan. While filling an immediate need for information the government cannot currently provide, Kazakhstani youth are learning the importance of advocacy and individual responsibility in a democratic civil society. Q1/98

**Fundraising Event Gains Increased Support From Government and Business**

The Almaty Club for Parents of Disabled Children (ARDI) is famous for its activity as a service delivery NGO working with disabled children and their families. According to Board Chairwoman Asya Artalova, Counterpart's training in Fundraising for Development has helped the group move toward financial sustainability. A 1998 New Years Charitable concert for disabled children was funded by a Korean company and attracted a number of local and foreign sponsors including Soros Foundation, AED, German House and the Ministry of Social Protection. ARDI leveraged this attention to secure government support for future activities. Q1/98

**Farmer Association Newspaper Provides Sole Source of Legal and Market News**

One of the strongest and most established NGOs in Kazakhstan, the Farmers and Cooperatives Association of Taldykorgan Oblast (FCA), received a grant of \$11,414 from Counterpart to set up an Information Center and publish a news-bulletin. Recently, after gaining advanced skills through Counterpart's Public Education through Mass Media training, they have changed their format to publish the first newspaper for private farmers - "The Farmer". The newspaper is the only source of updates on domestic laws affecting agricultural, market information and available international support and information resources for farmers. Q1/98

**Industry Association Informs Membership and Facilitates Improved Government Relations**

With financial support from Counterpart in the amount of \$4,510 along with support from other international and local organizations, the Almaty-based Association of Pharmacists increased circulation to allow for nationwide access to The Pharmacist Bulletin. Since privatization of the former state-run pharmaceutical service, Association publications are the only source of regular information about new drugs coming to the market, governmental regulations of pharmaceutical business, and new regulations of licensing and certification of wholesale and retail sale of drugs. The Counterpart grant also helped the Association organize a round table with participation of pharmaceutical specialists, businessmen, and governmental officials to discuss industry issues and the needs for policy changes on the part of government. Q3-4/97

**Wider Access to Information Technology through Internet Training**

Affordable access to information is still a severe limitation to citizen participation in democracy in Kazakhstan. Basic knowledge of Internet applications prevents most people utilizing this important information resource. A Counterpart NGO support grant allowed the Electron Association of Information Technology Users in Almaty to train 2,000 individuals and 150 NGO leaders in basic internet skills, as well as provide them with free Internet access. Q3-4/97

**Diabetic Society Delivers Services and Develops Financial Sustainability**

After the collapse of the Soviet state-run diabetic service, there is no source of education, products or advocacy for the large diabetic community in Kazakhstan. With a Counterpart Consortium NGO support grant, the Jambul City Diabetic Society opened a retail outlet and information clearing house where they sell specialized products and provide seminars and printed information. Proceeds from sales provided 15 diabetic teenagers with financial support and generate income to support other projects. Q3-4/97

**Strengthening Human Rights Education in Provincial Cities of Kazakhstan**

In December 1996, the Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights conducted the first ever human rights seminars held outside of the capital city. 150 participants in 5 cities included local officials, educators, students, NGO leaders and other community leaders. A set of printed materials about international and Kazakhstani human rights laws were distributed to encourage continuing education in these underserved areas. For most participants, this was their first experience with NGO advocacy, participatory dialogue and human rights education. Q3-4/97

### **Building Grassroots Activism Skills among Youth in Eastern Kazakhstan**

In July 1997, Counterpart Consortium awarded a grant of \$420 to the ecological group "Belovodye 1" from the industrial city Leninogorsk which is located in heavily polluted industrial area of Kazakhstan, to assist in the funding of a seven-day English/Environmental summer camp for 30 students from grades 8-10. Eight Peace Corps volunteers agreed to teach English and conduct environmental classes at the summer camp, while USIS provided money for materials. One of the by-products of the camp was to enable participants to be more articulate about the fragile environment of their region and to be able to speak out about it in various forums. Another benefit was the enhanced ability to use research sources other than those in Russian to pursue their interest in the environment. Q3-4/97

### **Parents Advocate for the Rights of their Disabled**

A Counterpart grant in the amount of \$10,344 helped Zhan to set up the first Almaty-based non-governmental computer training center for disabled children. During the one-year grant period, Association "Zhan" trained 180 disabled teenagers in computer literacy. With funding from a Counterpart grant, the NGO has started to issue a monthly bulletin "Disabled and Law" and has created a monthly television program "Chance" to inform parents with disabled children about their rights. The TV program and the bulletin also raised the issue of home education for disabled children and popularized activity of Kazakhstan and CIS NGOs in protecting legal rights and creating job opportunities for disabled. Q3-4/97

### **Advocating for the Rights of Single Mothers**

The Almaty-based Association of Single Mothers, which unites more than 200 single mothers, used a \$3,640 grant from Counterpart to create the Center for Moral, Psychological and Legal Support for single mothers. The Center published 1,000 copies of a brochure addressing legal aspects of the status of single mothers. It contains a collection of quotations of Kazakhstan laws and government regulations related to the issue. The brochure, the first of its kind in Kazakhstan, was distributed among members of the Association, other single mothers and sent to oblast cities to women activists to help them in their efforts to defend the rights of single mothers. This accomplishment is an important step in creating an advocacy base for single mothers. Q3/4-97

### **Women League of Creative Initiatives (WLCI)**

With the collapse of the soviet system of state support to arts, women-artists have had to adapt to the changing economic environment on their own. To support themselves, Almaty women artists--with the support of two Counterpart grants--have created an active NGO that has taken the lead in providing financial and technical support to women artists. With the latest grant from Counterpart, WLCI created an art studio to develop folk crafts and provide women-artists with marketing advice. 120 students and 8 arts instructors used the studio during 1996-1997. In particular, the Counterpart grant helped WLCI to establish cooperation with an important American partner, Berea College of Kentucky, to develop a marketing program for students of the Almaty Craft College. Berea is world-renowned as a center of expertise in design and marketing of traditional crafts. Q3-4/97

### **Raising Awareness of the Societal Contributions of the Disabled in Kazakhstan**

"Invalids" -- the term by which the disabled are referred in Kazakhstan -- are perceived as unable to make any valuable contribution to the social and economic life of their country. Kazakhstan's participation in the International Special Olympics has dramatically increased public awareness of the abilities of the disabled. Since the inception of Counterpart programs in Kazakhstan, Special Olympics of Kazakhstan has been an active participant in the range of services offered by Counterpart Consortium. A Corporate Challenge Grant from Counterpart matched a \$10,000 contribution by Chevron and enabled this NGO to purchase specialized equipment and generate additional contributions allowing participation in the World Winter Special Olympics games in Toronto, Canada, 1997, where Kazakh team won 22 gold, 7 silver and 6 bronze medals. Continued training, technical assistance and an additional Support Grant enabled the NGO to open 14 chapters across the country. Q3-4/97

**NGO Offers Accounting Skill Development for Other NGOs in Kazakhstan**

With the grant of \$3,822, the Almaty Center for Public Initiatives provided training in basic accounting skills for 150 NGO representatives from Kazakhstan and published a training manual to reinforce skills learned in training. 500 Kazakhstani NGOs received the manual – the first of its kind in the country – and have reported favorable results. The Center's work is seen as an important step in creating a sustainable source of appropriate NGO technical and management support in Kazakhstan. Q3-4/97

**Peer Activism Against Teenage Drug Use**

A Counterpart grant of \$750 helped an Almaty-based group of four former drug addicts to create "ANTINAR," an anti-drug information center for youth. Before they approached Counterpart, the group had been denied the support from various local governmental and non-governmental organizations. With on-going encouragement and participation in Counterpart training workshops, this fledgling group was able to register and develop a successful grant proposal. Their campaign against teenage drug usage in Almaty high schools is an important pilot effort. Q3-4/97

## KYRGYZSTAN

### **UMUT Public Association Builds Constituency through Public Relations**

The population of the Issyk-Kul region in Kyrgyzstan needs more information about the role of the NGO community in developing democratic society. Through a Counterpart training workshop in Newsletter Development the UMUT Public Association designed and published a promotional brochure about the NGO and distributed it to the general public. As a result of this campaign, the deputy of Parliament was interested in learning more about the organization. Impressed by the NGO's accomplishments and ability to affect change at the community level, he joined the Board of Directors and is actively involved in NGO activities. Q 1/00

### **NGO POLIS Reduces Voting Illiteracy**

Local elections in Kyrgyzstan on October 17, 1999 demonstrated a low level of legal literacy of both voters and election commissions. Among the most appalling violations were family voting, the absence of identification papers and inability of voters to fill out the ballots in a proper way (9% of the ballots filled out were invalid). Through counseling support from Counterpart and a grant from USAID the NGO held a nation-wide information campaign to improve voter understanding of the voting process. The NGO published 25,000 copies of color high quality posters both in Kyrgyz and Russian demonstrating the stages of voting, which were displayed in 2,064 election districts and public places. Based on the voting results the number of void ballots submitted throughout the republic was reduced to only 3.8%. Q 1/00

### **NGO - Mass Media Partnership Combats Smoking in Kyrgyzstan**

Tobacco smoking is one of the main risk factors for development of non-infectious diseases and contributes to 82% of all deaths by non-infections diseases. This problem is especially important today, when the quantities of smuggled cigarettes and toxic tobacco products made by foreign companies is increasing. With grant support from Counterpart Consortium, NGO Smoke Free Kyrgyzstan conducted a wide scale anti-tobacco "Quit and Win" campaign through mass media. This information campaign included 12 television and 25 radio programs, seven press conferences, four competitions, three roundtables and a conference, 61 newspaper articles, 65 lectures, three PSAs, nine posters and two anti-tobacco informational billboards. Based on monitoring results, 68% of the 1659 people that participated in the contest abstained from smoking for 2 months and 36% (597 people) quit smoking altogether. Q 1/00

### **NGO Business Training Helps Rural Women Secure Financing and Community Resources**

Deterioration of agribusiness in Kyrgyzstan after the collapse of the USSR has resulted in a 67% unemployment rate among rural women. To address this problem and improve socioeconomic conditions of rural communities, the *Union of Rural Women of the Issyk-Kul Region* implemented a training project with a small grant from Counterpart Consortium to provide training and counseling services to almost 1,500 women. As a result of their improved skills, trainees developed business plans and community project proposals that have received \$9,555 from the State Fund and the Agricultural Financial Corporation. Q 1/00

### **Association of Tax Inspectors Strengthens Its Financial Sustainability**

The only source of funding for the nonprofit Chamber of Tax Inspectors was income generated through fees for counseling services. In order to improve its financial sustainability and promote organizational development the NGO needed additional fundraising strategies. Knowledge and skills gained by the NGO leader at Counterpart Consortium training workshops allowed her to make changes in strategic planning to address the NGO's needs. As a result of the changes the group dramatically increased its financial sustainability from 1997-1999. The NGO raised more than \$30,000 from grants and increased the amount of fees collected to \$10,000. Q 1/00



### **Disabled Single Mothers Execute Successful Campaign to Help Themselves**

Many single-parent households led by disabled mothers fall below the poverty level. Their children suffer significant disadvantages as a result. Through technical assistance and counseling offered by Counterpart Consortium, the *Beitap Association of Disabled Single Mothers* launched the "For Happy Childhood" campaign to raise funds and increase public awareness about their problems. As a result:

- 10 organizations, including governmental agencies, businesses and international organizations, have provided funding and humanitarian assistance totaling \$7,058;
- the Medical Academy conducted health screenings and examinations for 14 of the children free of charge; and
- the Land Distribution Department allocated 3 hectares of land for the members use. The members grew a significant crop of cucumbers, pumpkins and cabbage and distributed the crops equally among member families. Q 1/00

### **Association of Law Scientists Diversifies Funding Sources**

The Association of Law Scientists in Kyrgyzstan needed additional funding to promote the development of a democratic state based on the rule of law through law making, independent expertise, introduction of new technologies and training of the Association staff members. Having acquired skills in fundraising and project design at Counterpart Consortium training workshops the Association was awarded more than \$30,000 from three donors to implement a series of projects on women's rights and open a study center on human rights. Q 1/00

### **Association of Law Scientists Institutionalizes Kyrgyz Human Rights Activists**

A low level of legal awareness does not allow the population of Kyrgyzstan to fully enjoy their rights. Therefore there was a need to improve legal support to citizens through the establishment of the Center for Study of Human Rights and training of specialists in this area. By using the skills gained at Counterpart workshops and through a \$5,029 grant funding the Association of Law Scientists opened such a center and designed a methodology manual on human rights. As a result of the project

- The Association collected 1,070 books and methodology materials for the Center and opened a training room where 125 attendees have been trained in human rights issues.
- A course on human rights was incorporated in the curricula of the law department at the Kyrgyz-Slavic University. 113 students successfully passed the exams on human rights and 47 graduated from the University majoring in human rights.
- Four university students participated in a competition on international humanities law and were prize winners.
- As a result of 5 roundtables conducted for Parliament, governmental agencies, law enforcement bodies, NGOs and educational institutions, the orphans of a children's home received humanitarian aid including clothes and toys. Q 1/00

### **NGO Facilitates Cross-Border Conflicts**

There are three Kyrgyz and one Tajik villages in the Leilek region of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border that share a single source of drinking water. For many years Kyrgyz and Tajik villagers have been in dispute over access to the water. Sometimes conflicts resulted in murders on both sides. Through negotiations with the fighting parties and local communities the NGO *For International Tolerance* conducted a roundtable to reach consensus on how to resolve water access. Using skills acquired at Counterpart training in Project Design and PRA methodology, the NGO trained representatives of the local NGO community in writing a grant application. The community successfully submitted an application to UNDP to build a water system with 14 pumps. The location of the pumps was determined at community-based meetings with the local governor to prevent the installation of pumps in places that would cause a new wave of conflicts. Q 1/00

### **Counterpart Newsletter Helps NGO Identify New Source of Financial Support**

NGOs still have limited access to information, especially about international donor agencies. As a result of the newsletter published by Counterpart Consortium and the local NGO *Zhan*, more information on a wide range of topics, including funding sources, has been made available to NGOs throughout Central Asia. The Women's League of Creative Initiative learned about the Global Fund for Women through the newsletter and recently won a grant from them to purchase basic office equipment for their office. Q 1/00

### **Association for Employment Promotion Creates Jobs through Developing Business-Incubator**

There is a high unemployment rate in the Kyrgyz Republic necessitating the creation of additional jobs. Through fundraising skills gained at Counterpart Consortium, the Association of Employment Promotion received a \$3,830 grant from the German Technical Assistance Program to establish a business incubator based on the "Ainur" joint-stock venture. As a result of the project, the Association will train workers, provide counseling services and assist the incubator with registration at the Ministry of Justice. The owners of the joint-stock venture provided the incubator with premises and equipment. Q 1/00

### **POLIS Center for Support of Election Systems Diversifies Funding Sources**

In order to promote democratic changes in Kyrgyzstan through the introduction of new election systems and technologies, POLIS, the Nonprofit Center for Support of Election Systems, had to raise additional funds. By using the skills acquired at Counterpart training workshops and through counseling services the NGO submitted a series of grant applications as well as made some improvements in the organizational development. As a result of fundraising activities the NGO generated \$39,579 from six donor organizations over the period of 2.5 years. Q 1/00

### **Advocacy and Policy Reform Results in Significant Savings that Utilities Pass On to Consumers**

Utility providers in Kyrgyzstan have been publishing outdated regulations for mandatory distribution to more than one million consumers at more than \$1 per copy. In addition to forcing the utilities to incur this significant expense, the contradictory information was confusing to consumers. In order to solve this problem, Aikyn Association of Consumer Rights Protection held a series of roundtables and public meetings with a range of parliamentarians, government officials, utility officials and other stakeholders. As a result, the outdated regulation was stricken from the legislative codex, saving \$1,659,547 in energy and \$1,659,547 in utility company overhead, that would have been passed on to consumers. Accurate regulations were subsequently included as a free supplement to a public service agreement. Q 1/00

### **Share of Women-Deputies Increases through NGO Interventions**

The 1999 local parliamentary elections resulted in a significant reduction in the number of women representatives (4 women among 105 deputies – 3.8%). Through counseling services from Counterpart Consortium and a small grant from USAID the Women's Center conducted 23 community-based meetings in 17 villages, 3 workshops for women-candidates and observers and established information boards for voters. The total number covered by the NGO information campaign totaled 760 people. Of the 12 women trained by the Women's Center, three were elected to rayon governing bodies and two to regional governing bodies in the 2000 elections. Q 1/00

### **Bishkek Center of Social Initiatives Advocates for Migrants' Voting Rights**

Only 38% of voters, who are internal migrants living in new residential areas around Bishkek, participated in local elections on October 17, 1999 in Kyrgyzstan. Internal migrants abstained from voting, indicating a need to increase the level of their participation in parliamentary elections. Through training and counseling from Counterpart and a small USAID grant the Bishkek Center of Social Initiatives trained 80 leaders from new residential areas around Bishkek who continued voter education on a community level as well as published and distributed 500 copies of a directory on modern election technologies. The project resulted in a 22% increase in the number of internal migrants who voted in the parliamentary elections. Q 1/00

### **ILIM Educational Complex Secures a Tax-Exemption Under Unfriendly Legal Conditions**

According to the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic all non-governmental entities have to pay 20% value added tax. ILIM Educational Complex is a nonprofit organization that does not provide paid services but had to pay the VAT. Through advocacy skills acquired at Counterpart workshops ILIM submitted various financial and registration papers to the tax inspection to prove the status of an educational association. As a result of lobbying the ILIM Complex was exempted from VAT for one year, totaling a savings of \$5,265 to the school budget. Q 1/00

### **Association of Tax Inspectors Successfully Lobbies Tax Regulations in Kyrgyzstan**

There are significant contradictions between the law and implementing regulations regarding deductions and use of funding for prevention and mitigation of emergencies. The Regulations provided a wider interpretation of law provisions, which entailed an increased amount of taxes levied on taxpayers. The Association of Tax Inspectors considered that it was an infringement on taxpayers' rights because some of the deductions were wrongly interpreted and therefore illegal. By using facilitation skills acquired at training workshops of Counterpart, the Association members conducted a series of roundtables for the republican tax inspection and lawyers. Three weeks, later based on the discussion results, the Ministry of Finance canceled the regulations and many Kyrgyz taxpayers were exempt from extra deductions. Q 1/00

### **Talas NGO Pilots Innovative Community-based Support for Local School**

The Talas school #2 did not have a dining room and 1,180 school students did not have an opportunity to eat during the school day. Having acquired knowledge and skills at Counterpart Consortium training workshops and roundtables the NGO *Tikmy* rented dining space at the school, made repairs and equipped it to provide schoolchildren with hot lunches. As a result of the project the NGO:

- Provided 12 children from low-income families with free breakfast
- Attracted volunteers to rehabilitate the dining facilities and neighborhood around the school
- Enhanced its community image and is encouraging other schools to replicate its experience
- Contributed to a decrease in the incidence of hepatitis from 18 cases in 1997 to 3 in 1999.

Taking into account the importance of the project the city department of education allocated funds, generated through rental payment, to cover food expenses for children of low-income families. Q 1/00

### **Association for Employment Promotion Creates Jobs for Vulnerable People**

Families who have disabled children have to survive both financial and emotional difficulties. They lack the money to buy medicines and appropriate food. Most of mothers are unemployed because they stay at home to take care of children. With improved skills and a grant from Counterpart Consortium, the *Association for Employment Promotion* opened a mini-bakery and kindergarten. As a result of the project, six mothers work at the bakery and four mothers at the kindergarten providing care to eight disabled children who have three meals a day and undergo psychological and physical rehabilitation. The State Employment Department allocated \$270 for food and the bakery generates \$275 by selling pastries. The money is used to supplement the incomes of a number of member families. Q 1/00

### **Rural NGO Counters Refugee-Women Unemployment**

The population (5720 people) of the Sosnovka village in Kyrgyzstan is very diverse and mainly consists of refugees, disabled and single mothers. Official data indicates there are 219 unemployed in the village. By using skills gained at Counterpart's Project Design workshop and through a grant from the locally organized grant committee based in Kara-Balta the *Golden Hands* NGO implemented a small community-based project. With small grant funding the group purchased raw materials to make national felt crafts and made an agreement with a local farm to employ 33 women for short term. The number of people who turned to the NGO for employment opportunities increased by 60%. Q 1/00

### **Training Center for Disabled Children Succeeds in Establishing Social Partnership**

At the present 43 children with varying degrees of disability attend the Training Center for Disabled Children. Many of them are unable to move without help or have to use wheelchairs. The NGO wasn't properly equipped to handle the transportation needs of their students. Through skills gained at Counterpart workshops, the leader of the NGO reached an agreement with the Lega Transportation Company whereby it would provide vehicles and pay 50% of transportation costs for two years. Q 1/00

### **NGO Relieves Burden on Refugee Family Budgets**

A \$35 annual fee introduced by the Ministry of Education for renovation of school classes in 1999-2000 was unaffordable to many parents and caused financial problems for 59 low-income refugee families in the Alekseevka village. 46 children stopped attending school. By applying the skills gained at training workshops of Counterpart Consortium NGO *Hairinisso* organized a series of community-based meetings with senior citizens and parents to lobby the interests of refugee families. As a result of actions undertaken by the NGO 73% of school students were exempt from the repair fees, for 14% it was reduced by 50% and the total number of refugee children attending the school increased by 35%. Q 1/00

### **Free Air Time for the Nonprofit Sector**

Local television channels are not interested in broadcasting video materials about the NGO community because they are not profitable. In addition, TV companies do not have enough resources to produce NGO related materials. By using excellent negotiation skills the NGO Support Center "Consulting" in Kara-Balta conducted a series of meetings with the NGO "Edinstvo", which is a representative of TV "Pyramid" in the region. As a result of the negotiations 5 TV programs made by Counterpart Consortium and UNHCR will appear on television on a daily basis for a month and will be viewed by the citizens of two regions in the Chi valley. Video films will address social problems peculiar to that area and the role of the NGO community in resolving them. Q 4/99

### **Rural Kyrgyzstan NGO Success in Fundraising and Financial Diversification**

235 disabled women in the town of Naryn live only on disability pensions and can hardly cover the costs of food and clothing. To advocate for their own rights disabled women established the Center for Social Protection of Disabled in 1998. Through training in fundraising from Counterpart Consortium, the NGO members diversified fundraising strategies and conducted a charitable marathon on October 12, 1999. As a result of the marathon, the NGO raised \$1,400 in local currency and in-kind contributions, including a 50-hectare plot of land that was allocated to the NGO by the regional governor. Q 4/99

### **"Umut" Crisis Center Succeeds in Fundraising**

There are many women who face difficult situations in life and are unable to get support either from families or anywhere else. Therefore establishing crisis centers that provide immediate psychotherapy and counseling to abused women is presently a very important issue. The government cannot provide funding to support crisis centers and the latter have to rely on international assistance. By using the skills gained at a Counterpart Consortium training workshop in *Fundraising* and *Project Design* the nonprofit Crisis Center submitted a series of grant applications and five of them were approved by HIVOS, TACIS and the Soros Foundation. As a result of these successful fundraising activities *Umut* Crisis Center generated more than \$300,000 from a number of diverse sources. Q 4/99

### **Development of Rural Community as a Result of Successful Fundraising**

Social and economic crises have an impact on residents of rural areas, which make up 70% of the population in Kyrgyzstan. Through Counterpart Consortium training workshops NGO *Shoola* acquired strong skills in project design and fundraising that helped the NGO to receive grants from Counterpart Consortium, Mercy Corps, Earth Sacred Network, Dutch Interchurch Aid and the Eurasia Foundation totaling \$383,000. As a result of successful fundraising the NGO had the opportunity to increase a series of community development projects to address the needs of rural population. Q 4/99

### **Rural NGO Raises Funds to Improve Children's Health**

In the Bazar-Korgon region, Kyrgyzstan, there is a high incidence of anemia, bronchitis, endocrine and respiratory diseases among children from the families of refugees, environmental migrants and poor. Parents cannot afford to pay for treatment and costly medicines. Owing to the skills gained at a Counterpart Consortium workshop in Project Design, the NGO "Protection of Rural Children's Rights" developed a project "Healthy Nation", which was jointly supported by a \$3500 grant from UNHCR and \$1050 from local government. The local community donated 210 kg of herbs. As a result of the project, 420 sick children received a 1-3 month rehabilitation treatment in the community-based health center.

Q 4/99

### **Nonprofit Crisis Center "Sezim" Generates Funds to Support Abused Women**

Economic constraints and low standards of living often cause cases of domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan. Public institutions cannot provide good care and psychotherapy to abused women. Therefore nonprofit crisis centers take the lead in addressing this problem. Through training and consulting services from Counterpart Consortium, the non-governmental Crisis Center *Sezim* developed fundraising skills and generated \$38,794 from the Soros Foundation, US Democracy Commission and the US Ignasio Martin Foundation to operate a hot line, provide counseling services and psychotherapy, open a resource center, and bring international expertise to Kyrgyzstan. Q 4/99

### **Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights Meets the Legal Needs of Disadvantaged**

Based on data from a recent survey of the Kyrgyzstan population, 95% of people are not well aware of the Constitution, KP legislation and international laws on human rights. In order to raise funds to increase the population's legal awareness, the Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights attended a series of Counterpart Consortium trainings. As a result of the skills gained at the workshops the NGO was awarded grants by the National Democracy Committee, the US Democratic Commission, the Soros Foundation and TACIS in the amount of \$47,525 and 6,858 ECU to meet the legal needs of the disadvantaged. Q 4/99

### **NGOs Become More Active in Increasing Citizen Participation in the Political Process**

Many voters in the Kyrgyz Republic abstained from voting in previous elections and NGOs did not actively participate in programs aimed at voter education. The recent results of special election grants allocated by USAID to support open, free and fair election-related initiatives demonstrate that the situation has improved. Of the 27 grants awarded in this special program, 70% (about \$39,000) were awarded to 19 NGOs trained by Counterpart Consortium. Demonstrating a substantial increase in skills, these innovative NGO projects included election monitoring by local independent observers, mock elections at colleges, civic education, voter's training among women and in rural areas. One survey funded by the USAID grant and implemented by "Alga" Union of Rural Women indicated a 10-12% increase in women's participation in recent elections as compared to the previous referendum. Q 4/99

### **Association for Support of Businesswomen Advocates for its Members**

Very often women who own small businesses in the Kyrgyz Republic and are unable to make sufficient investments are faced with the threat of going bankrupt as a result of unfavorable tax policy and little knowledge about taxation. Through skills gained at Counterpart Consortium workshops in *Association Development* and *Advocacy* the Association for Support of Businesswomen efficiently advocates for its members by providing consulting services, distributing relevant information through the newsletter and lobbying the interests of its members in tax inspections. As a result of the efforts undertaken by the Association, 4 businesswomen were exempted from fines charged by tax inspections totaling 23 000 soms (\$600). Q 4/99

### **NGO For International Tolerance Provides Support to Senior Citizens and Encourages Ethnic Tolerance**

After the closing of mines in the Kyrgyz city *Sulukta* and the migration of much of the adult population to Russia, many senior citizens were left without any means for living. The *NGO For International Tolerance* identified 86 single old women unable to survive under current conditions. Having acquired skills at Counterpart Consortium training workshops, the NGO members received a grant from the Swiss Coordination Center to implement the project "Cherished Grandmother." As a result of the project, 37 old women have been receiving a \$10 monthly allowance and were adopted by foster families and the "Mercy" Youth Movement. They are taken good care of by their new families and supported by community members. NGO activities promote friendship and assistance on the part of people of different nationalities living in the community. Q 4/99

### **NGO "For International Tolerance" Fosters Partnership Among Local Government and NGO Community**

In the Batken region, a very remote part of Kyrgyzstan, the NGO community is a new phenomenon and village government does not understand the role of NGOs in addressing community needs and collaborative activities. Having attended the Counterpart Consortium workshop in Social Partnership the *NGO For International Tolerance* conducted a series of negotiations with the regional governor. As a result of efficient negotiations the governor appointed a person in each village governing body to coordinate NGO activities to address community needs and involve nonprofit organizations in decision-making. Q 4/99

### **Legal Advocacy Available to Disadvantaged Groups through NGO in Kyrgyzstan**

Retired, disabled, unemployed and low-income groups cannot afford legal services and do not apply to the court because trial expenses are very high, which is an infringement on their rights. Through a grant awarded by Counterpart Consortium, the NGO "Civil Dignity" provides free legal counseling to disadvantaged groups of the population. In 1999, the NGO provided 700 free consultations and won 4 court suits, totaling \$700, defending the rights of low-income citizens. Q 4/99

### **Nonprofit Association of Investment Funds is an Equal Partner in Amending the Legislation**

The law "Investment Funds in the Kyrgyz Republic" became outdated and required amendments in order to promote further development of investment funds and shareholders. Through a \$12,780 grant from Counterpart Consortium, 4 members of the Association of Investment Funds *Semetei* were included in the National Securities Committee under the President of the KR and worked for three months on finalizing the draft law. Including all the amendments and propositions made by the Association, the new law was signed by the President of the KR and became effective on July 26, 1999. It reflects and advocates for the interests of private investment funds. Q 4/99

### **NGO Catalyzes Community Development in Kyrgyzstan**

The elementary/middle school in the village of Efironos was deteriorating and neither community nor local governing bodies had funds to rehabilitate it. The villagers appealed to the women's NGO *Jez-Oimok* for help. Using the skills acquired at Counterpart Consortium workshops and follow-on consultations with Counterpart NGO Support Center staff, the NGO received a \$3,260 grant from an international donor. The local government provided an in-kind contribution and equipment worth \$500. Repairs were made with volunteer labor, expertise and materials from parents. As a result of grant support, community mobilization and government engagement, the school facilities were upgraded before the new school year. Moreover, the local department of education suggested that *Jez-Oimok* open a high school and start delivering an optional course in artisans crafts for high school students. Q 4/99

### **Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights Advocates for the Rights of the Dorm Tenants**

The tenants of a dormitory belonging to the Bishkek Stock joint venture could not privatize their dwellings for a long time. The Nonprofit Committee on Human Rights took the lead in advocating for the rights of the dormitory tenants. Through a \$2,396 grant from Counterpart Consortium, the NGO lobbied for the termination of an illegal regulation issued by the Mayor's office. As a result of the project, 21 tenants were able to privatize their apartments. Q 4/99

### **City Government Benefits from Attendance at Counterpart Training in Kyrgyzstan**

Since 1993 a broken water system in Tash-Kumyr has resulted in inadequate drinking water and the frequent outbreaks of infectious diseases. After attending the Project Design training offered by Counterpart Consortium, a city official worked with Counterpart staff to develop a proposal that was funded by Mercy Corps and helped the city repair the water system. As a result, 22,000 people now have regular access to potable water. Q 3/99

### **Successful NGO Brucellosis Campaign Documented by Kyrgyzstan Government Statistical Survey**

In response to a sharp increase in the incidence of brucellosis in 1996, NGO Tree of Life conducted a series of awareness and prevention campaigns targeting farmers in two oblasts. A recently released report from the Ministry of Health and National Statistics compared the continued incidence of brucellosis in the oblasts targeted by the NGO and three other oblasts. The results were conclusive. Brucellosis cases decreased by 40% in one oblast and the number of human illnesses resulting from the consumption of contaminated meat products was also significantly reduced. In three neighboring oblasts, incidents of Brucellosis continued to increase. Q 3/99

### **Public Center of Ecological Information Sharpens Its Mission Towards Stakeholders' Needs**

With partnership grant funding from Counterpart, the Public Center of Ecological Information (PCEI) and the Beacon Project, a nonprofit organization from the USA, worked together to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for PCEI that reflected the NGO community in Kyrgyzstan. The plan was designed in collaboration with the local stakeholders and prioritized such areas of activity as fundraising, volunteer and NGO management as well as long-term newsletter development. Lessons learned through this planning process have been dispersed to the NGO community in Kyrgyzstan. The PCEI strategic plan was adapted to NGO needs and is currently used as a sample. Furthermore, the partners worked together to create a web page that documents all PCEI activities (<http://www.beaconproject.org/pcei>). Q 3/99

### **NGO Fosters Community Initiative and Corporate Partnership in Kyrgyzstan**

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union Kyzyl-Suu village residents were without recreational facilities and services for the young people of the village. After a community roundtable facilitated by Counterpart, a group of villagers started a small NGO to spur community actions. Counterpart provided training and other support that dramatically increased the NGO's capacity. Resources from local businesses and the Kumtor Mining Company were mobilized to open a community-based Youth Center for 25 children. Groups interested in all activities such as arts & crafts, dancing, literature, the ecology of the Lake Issyk-Kul, and English language studies are making use of the center. Q 3/99

### **Kyrgyzstan NGOs Demonstrate Increased Capacity to Generate Diverse Funding Sources**

The ability of NGOs to obtain funding from diverse sources is an indication of increased capacity in a number of areas. Through participation in a range of Counterpart trainings, activities and small grant programs, two NGOs are implementing projects with funds from new or multiple donors.

- *NGO Women Constructors* is helping establish fresh water systems in new suburbs populated primarily by migrants from rural areas with grant funding from UNDP, Soros Foundation and Counterpart. In addition, a significant portion of the project is funded by local donations.
- *The Nature Lovers Club* has been awarded a UNDP grant to plant rare native species in city parks, working in partnership with the *Children's Creative Center Baldary*. Q 3/99

### **Information and Legal Support of the Afghan War Participants**

Afghan War participants, given the present conditions of a market economy, are now in need of information, legal consultations and technical assistance. Most of them cannot access such support because services are fee-based and 70% of the war participants are unemployed. The Association of Afghan War Veterans in Kyrgyzstan was awarded a grant by Counterpart Consortium to implement the project "Information and Legal Support of the Afghan War Participants". As a result of the project 22 people received a discount for document photocopying, 23 war participants accessed in-patient and outpatient health services for free and 130 people were provided with information and legal support. The Association published and distributed nearly 60 copies of a brochure containing extracts from laws and government regulations related to the rights and benefits of Afghan war participants. Q 3/99

### **Kyrgyzstan NGO Fosters Diverse Youth Involvement in Elections**

*Polis* has conducted a number of innovative activities to encourage young people to become more active in elections and the government decision-making processes. With grant funding from Counterpart, they have held televised game shows teaching election processes, developed peer counseling to introduce civics education to rural areas and held a mock candidate forum where they elected their own president, parliament and local governing bodies. As a result of the interest and skills developed through these activities, young people have initiated a number of their own activities that are making significant contributions to democracy in Kyrgyzstan and to the sustainability of *Polis*. For example:

- Bishkek university students have conducted similar activities in 16 different training activities;
- Several students in the Osh region have been asked to serve on election committees;
- Two program participants are helping the Ministry of Justice develop a voter education program for Jalal-Abad Oblast;
- Two participants have been hired by the NGO to coordinate a new project to establish a network of young voter clubs throughout the republic; and
- Almost 200 program alumni currently volunteer for *Polis*. Q 3/99

### **NGO Mobilizes Community to Address Community Needs**

The quality of school education was very low in the remote village of Too Moyun in Osh Oblast, Kyrgyzstan because the local school did not have adequate facilities or professional employees. Using the skills acquired at Counterpart Consortium workshops NGO and Community, Project Design and Fundraising for NGO the NGO *Mekhri-Shavkat* encouraged an initiative group headed by the school principal to establish a new CBO. This has begun a long-term collaboration between the two groups to address community needs including the ones mentioned above. As a first step of efficient partnership the newly established group received a \$250 grant from Mercy Corps International to restructure a local school into a lyceum able to respond to community needs. The lyceum was also supported by Soros Foundation with books totaling \$350. Q 3/99

### **NGO Helps Rural Community Establish Maternity Hospital in Kyrgyzstan**

When the maternity hospital serving Talas Oblast was closed the women living around Koi-Sai village had to travel more than 50 kilometers on bad roads for pre-natal or maternity care and local health officials documented an increase in miscarriages and infant mortality. With grant funding from Counterpart, the Women's Support Center conducted a series of workshops for women throughout the oblast to educate them about this problem and foster a community-based response to the hospital closure. As a result, several attendees of the training formed their own organization to solve this problem. They received funding support from the Soros Foundation, and local government support for staff salaries and community volunteers in order to remodel a facility to serve as a small women's health clinic serving six villages around Koi Sai. Since its opening in January 1999, 87 women have given birth to healthy babies at this new facility. Q 3/99



### **NGO Helps Village Obtain Access to Drinking Water in Rural Kyrgyzstan**

Mangyt Village in Osh Oblast obtained drinking water directly from irrigation pipes, resulting in 12 documented cases of typhoid in 1998. Through community mobilization from NGO *Mekhri Shavkat*, the village established a community-based water committee. Using skills learned through participation in Counterpart training workshops, the NGO helped the community develop a proposal that won \$3,000 in grant support from the International Water Secretariat. As a result, 2,000 villagers in two communities have access to running water and there have been no cases of typhoid yet this year. Q 3/99

### **Private Farmer Association Helps Members Access Credit and Learn Market Skills**

A 1998 survey identified more than 600 farmers in the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan. This large population lacks access to information and training about a range of market economics and agribusiness techniques and concepts. To improve their social and economic status, as well as to increase the level of farmers' awareness in the basics of market economy, the Batken Private Farmer's Association opened a resource center with grant funding from Counterpart. As a result, 230 out of 240 farmers trained at the center have submitted loan applications and have been awarded credits totally more than 4 million sum. The PFA is also using a database to improve coordination among farmers. Q 3/99

### **Integration of Tolerance Education in Kyrgyz School Curricula**

There is an evidence of numerous interpersonal conflicts among high school students of the Issyk-Kul region, which leads to poor attendance and disinterest in school studies. The members of the MAK Foundation made several attempts to write a grant application to address all those problems. A series of training workshops attended by the NGO members at Counterpart Consortium helped them write an efficient proposal and acquire skills in situation analysis and needs assessment. In addition, Counterpart assisted the NGO in searching for a partner to organize the training of trainers to conduct classes in tolerance education for students. Tolerance and Harmony Foundation was identified as a project partner. To implement the project, the MAK Foundation worked in partnership with local Department of Education, which assisted the NGO in distributing information to schools throughout the region as well as provided the group with transportation and a training room. 30 schoolteachers of the Issyk-Kul region attended training of trainers. The Regional Department of Education approved the new course of study and as a result of that tolerance training was officially integrated in the school curricula for the students of 5-10 grades at 30 public schools. Q2/99

### **Distance Learning Partnership Mobilized Student Environmental Activism in Kyrgyzstan**

Secondary schools in Kyrgyzstan are lagging behind in high-tech information approaches in models of education. There are few modern-equipped computers and limited access to the Internet in high schools. With support from Counterpart Consortium's partnership grant program, the NGO ILIM has formed a partnership with the US NGO 21st Century Schoolhouse. 21st Century Schoolhouse links schools from around the world in an integrated Internet-based curriculum. Although the project will officially begin at the start of the academic year in the fall, preliminary internet-based collaboration has already delivered significant results for ILIM and 22 students participating from different public schools. For example:

- With minimal assistance from teachers, a group of students designed and is implementing a campaign to increase public awareness of the value of National parklands.
- 4 students are designing a web page for the Kyrgyzstan Schoolhouse team.
- Students of ILIM have been trained at a series of workshops in leadership and ecology-related issues. As a result, four students were able to design and conduct training in "Choosing an Island", which is a part of the overall "21st Century Schoolhouse" program. The training participants selected an island where they would create a virtual and ideal country.
- 16 students use new personal e-mail accounts on a regular basis; via Internet, ILIM has established a strong network with partners with the same mission from Moscow and Novosibirsk. Q 2/99

### **Association of Lawyers-Scientists Ensures Inclusion of Human Rights in University Curriculum**

The low level of public awareness about human rights is one of the problems facing Kyrgyz society. One of the reasons causing the problem is the lack of proper education for lawyers in Kyrgyz Universities. Association of Lawyers-Scientists attended Counterpart's training and got a grant, which helped them elaborate a new education program on human rights issues and negotiate it with the headquarters of the University. As a result, the subject "Human Rights" was included into curricula of the juridical department of the Kyrgyz-Slavic University last year. Currently, 4th and 5th year students who do not pass the examination on the subject will lose eligibility for Master's Degree. Q 2/99

### **Rural NGOs in Kyrgyzstan Proactively Uses Fundraising Tools.**

There are no legislative incentives for local corporations to donate money to NGOs. Therefore, fundraising activities in the country are not always successful. Members of the NGO "Leader" attended Counterpart's training and received a grant to act as an NGO supporting organization in the eastern Issyk-Kul region. The NGO staff has been trained as trainers to conduct Counterpart training workshops for the NGO community of Issyk-Kul. They held the first ever raffle in Kyrgyzstan, and approached private companies and donor agencies for donations of items. The NGO received products and services worth \$750 as in-kind contribution, which were used as prizes in the raffle. The raffle itself helped the NGO generate \$850 that was used to conduct community-based activities and sports competitions for youth. Q 2/99

### **Impacts After the Almaty Workshop on Voters' Training**

Addressing the needs of the upcoming elections the NGO community in Kyrgyzstan started to raise the citizens' awareness on voters issues as well as train independent observers for the elections to be held on different levels in the foreseeable future in the Kyrgyz Republic. In the fall 1998 Counterpart Consortium sponsored the travel of several Kyrgyzstani NGOs to participate in the workshop on voters training conducted by the US League of Women Voters through a partnership project with a partner NGO from Kazakhstan. As a result of the workshop

- Center InterBilim trained 200 independent observers who were actively involved in the referendum held in Kyrgyzstan last year. Center InterBilim was nominated as a partner of OSCE for training independent observers for upcoming elections of deputies for local keneshes, Jogorku Kenesh (the Parliament) and the President.
- The rural electorate is often not served by urban NGOs. To address this, the NGO *Women's Support Center* developed a two-day training module for voters in rural areas, based on knowledge and materials acquired at the Almaty workshop. This past quarter, 50 village citizens in two pilot areas were trained in this new module and found the training to be very efficient. Q 2/99

### **Tax Consultants Advocate Their Interests**

Tax consultant is a new profession in the Kyrgyz labor market. Therefore a group of independent tax consultants established a public association for promoting their profession and advocating their interests and rights as well as those of taxpayers. To acquire a legal status for the association and tax consultants, which was not identified before, the NGO drafted the Law about Tax Consultants and submitted it to Mr. Usenov, the deputy of the Kyrgyz Parliament who is the chairman of the Tax Committee. Mr. Usenov approved the draft and recommended the tax consultants get the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Tax Inspection, which otherwise might become an opposition. In January 1999 the NGO executive director attended the workshop on Social Partnership at Counterpart Consortium, at which participants assisted in designing a plan of action for promoting NGO interests and establishing partnership relationships with governmental bodies. Over the next several months the NGO had meetings and negotiations with the Minister of Finance and the Director of the National Tax Inspection. As a result of the cooperation and support provided by the governmental agencies, the new Law on Tax Inspectors was adopted and became effective on May 14, 1999. The Law reinforced the status of tax consultants and their professional association. Q 2/99

### **NGO Combats Unemployment in Remote Area of by Supporting Micro-Credit Initiatives**

Kok-Yangak suffers from very high unemployment since the only industry in the town is now operating at only 7% production capacity. The Kok-Yangak City Foundation, a local NGO, has participated in Counterpart trainings, TOTs and other support activities. As a result, new NGO trainers conducted training workshops for 80 unemployed in the region. Forty of attendees received micro credits in the amount of about \$150 each from UNDP. Q 2/99

### **NGO Wins Grant to Support Disabled Children in Kyrgyzstan**

20 disabled children with the cerebral palsy in the remote village of At-Bashy in the Naryn oblast did not have an access to educational facilities and their mothers were deprived of the possibility to work. Both mothers and children were socially and financially vulnerable. Under the assistance of the Naryn NGO Support Center the members of "Ak-Bairak" NGO designed a grant application to support disabled children and their mothers. In February 1999 Know-How Fund from Great Britain helped the NGO to establish a kindergarten unit for 20 disabled children and a sewing co-op for mothers. The Know-How Fund supplied the kindergarten with furniture, bed sheets and toys and equipped the sewing co-op with 11 sewing machines, which totaled to \$3140. As a result of the project, women and children who had been doomed to spend their lives at home, could acquire an opportunity to communicate with each other, find meaning in life and community support. The project was supported by the local government, which cooperatively with the NGO repaired the premises for the co-op and made other required arrangements to open it. Q 2/99

### **NGO Documents Increase in Public Awareness of STD Prevention in Rural Kyrgyzstan**

Public awareness of STD prevention and treatment options in Naryn is low, reflecting a lack of health education. Tendesh, an active participant in a range of Counterpart NGO support activities, obtained grant support from a Swiss donor to conduct activities designed to improve public awareness, including an anonymous clinic, seminars, newsletters and a public information media campaign. A survey to determine the immediate impact of the project showed that the number of visits to health facilities to get STD treatment increased significantly from 4 to 25 per month. Q 2/99

### **Kyrgyzstan NGO Demonstrates Stronger Institutional Capacity with Diversified Funding Sources**

Shoola NGO was one of the first Counterpart grantees in Issyk-Kul Oblast and has attended a broad range of Counterpart support activities since 1996. Since that time the NGO was very successful in soliciting money from international agencies. Last year the NGO got grants from Dutch Interchurch Aid (\$23,000) and the Eurasia Foundation (\$8,660). Sacred Earth Network donated a laptop and free access to e-mail for a year. DAI awarded a sub-contract to provide assistance to a Kazakh NGO to strengthen their project implementation skills. Q 2/99

### **Kyrgyz NGO Demonstrates Increased Capacity to Implement Micro-Credit Projects**

Poverty among women is a crucial issue throughout Kyrgyzstan. Members of *Alga* have been actively involved in the UNDP-funded poverty alleviation program. More than 100 rural women received micro credits from *Alga* last year. Realizing that the rural population needs training in micro credit management before starting small businesses, the members of *Alga*, together with the Forum of Women's Organizations of Kyrgyzstan and supported by Counterpart, designed the following training modules: Business Plan Design, Marketing, Basics of Micro Crediting and Small Business. As a result of the support provided to the loan groups by *Alga*, the groups achieved 100% repayment, despite a relatively high interest rate of 40%. Q 1/99

### **NGO Mobilizes Community Development Funded Through Local Fundraising Efforts**

The NGO Bilim Madanyat Kairumduluk in Ala-Buka raised over \$4,000 in local currency through event-based fundraising and direct appeals in the community. All the money was earmarked to improve educational opportunities for talented children from the poorest families in the community. The leaders and members of this NGO have taken part in many Counterpart training workshops and other activities for the past two years. The funds raised were used to support the following projects:

- Completion of a water reservoir and irrigation systems for 600 hectares of farmland
- A new roof for the Jailobaev school and a heating system for Baltakulov school
- Tuition support for 150 students, including one Medical Academy student in Bishkek. Q 1/99

### **Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights Defends Individual Defendants in Court**

Frequent infringements on human rights in the Kyrgyz Republic led to the establishment of a number of monitoring organizations, including the Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights. With training and grant support from Counterpart, the KCHR has increased the number of citizens who report human rights abuses through a network of 4 offices and affiliates throughout the country. In March 1999, the NGO received a total of 314 applications for assistance in protesting human rights abuses. KCHR advocates participated in 7 trials, with favorable outcomes in all seven. Q 1/99

### **NGOs Band Together to Halt Plant Construction in Violation of Environmental Protection Laws**

Plans for construction of a Kyrgyz-Chinese paper plant in Chui-Tokmok town violated current Kyrgyzstan law. At the request of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, an affiliate of the NGO *Greenwomen* led an ad hoc coalition of NGOs in launching an information campaign against the plant. The NGOs attracted public attention to the issue in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other NIS countries through newspaper stories, radio programs and the collection of signatures. They made contacts with relevant officials and identified advocates among them. The next phase was an appeal to governmental agencies, to convince government officials to respect the position that is consistent with Kyrgyz Republic laws on environmental protection. As a result of these actions the construction of the plant was postponed. Q 1/99

### **NGOs Help Communities Establish Councils of Elders to Facilitate Refugee Integration and Support**

The NGOs *Hairenso* Women's Society and *Mok-Suu* were recently established to address the concerns of the more than three thousand Tajik refugees that reside in the Jaiyl and Panfilov regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. By participating in the broad range of support services offered through the Counterpart Consortium Kara-Balta NGO Support Center, these NGOs decided to organize elections for a Council of Elders in each refugee village. The 18 Councils (a total of nine councils in each region) represent and protect the interests of the refugees by holding community meetings and gathering information about the problems of their community. Council representatives make recommendations to international assistance organizations and provide them with information about the needs of the most needy refugee families. They are also providing refugees with information about their rights and sources of support. Q 1/99

### **NGO and Government Collaborate to Provide Micro-Credit to Women-owned Businesses**

Access to credit is a major barrier to the creation of small businesses, especially among women in rural areas. The NGO Rural Women works to support rural farmers in a remote part of Issyk-Kul Oblast. They have been active participants in Counterpart Consortium programs for four years and collaborate with other NGOs to provide training to more than 20 women in small business development. As a result of their contributions to community development in their region, the State Fund for Small Business Support has signed an agreement to formalize collaboration with the NGO. The agreement included the provision of \$6,000 in credit to support two women-owned businesses – a dry cleaner and public bath. NGO Rural Women will provide support and monitoring services to ensure that the loans are repaid. Q 4/98

### **Refugee Integration through NGO Job Skills Training and Community Outreach Programs**

There are about 3,600 refugees and migrants from Tajikistan. They are among the most vulnerable groups in Jayl and Panfilov Rayons. Only 10% of those capable of working are gainfully employed. Most lack Russian and Kyrgyz language skills, education, training and work experience, making them noncompetitive in the local job market. The local public employment center cannot help them because they are not citizens. With a Counterpart Consortium support grant, the Job Seekers Club has providing job skills training, language lessons and life skills counseling for 60 refugees. Two local refugee NGOs collaborated as liaisons with the refugee community. Almost 60% of the refugee trainees have gotten jobs as a result of the NGO program. Q 4/98

### **NGO Brings New Resources to Government Children's Hospital**

The Children Sanitarium in Bazar Korgon treats between 30 to 100 orphans and severely ill children every day. Most of these children are unable to attend local schools, but the Sanitarium offered no educational services. The Society for the Protection of Rural Children's Rights, a registered non-governmental organization, which supports the sanitarium, used skills gained through Counterpart training and worked with the Jalalabad NGO Support Center to create a two-room activity center with a newly-renovated library and playroom. The NGO obtained funding and in-kind support from a number of foundation and individual supporters. Q 4/98

### **Local Government Contributes to NGO Success in Private Sector Fundraising**

The successful youth job skills program offered by NGO Edinstvo in Kara-Balta could not expand without additional computers to use in training young people in marketable computer skills. Based on consultation from Counterpart Consortium's NGO Support Center in Kara-Balta, the NGO approached both government and the private sector to gain their help in supporting local youth. The local mayor lent his support to a direct mail fundraising campaign to leading businesses in the area. As a result, two new computers have been donated by two businesses in the area. Q 4/98

### **NGO-Corporate Partnership Develops Marketable Skills and Creates Jobs for Women**

The Women's Congress, a Counterpart Consortium trainee, strives to address the disproportionate rate of unemployment among women in the Kyrgyz Republic. With support from the Kyrgyz-Turkish Committee and financial contributions from a local joint venture company, a group of women will train in carpet-making and business skills in Western Turkey. The company has also donated carpet looms to support the formation of women-owned weaving cooperatives to generate even more employment and income for women when the training program is completed. Q 4/98

### **Local Government Praises NGO Efforts to Improve Rural Village Drinking Water**

With a Counterpart Partnership grant, NGO Ata-Jurt and the Canadian International Water Committee helped four village communities improve their drinking water. All of the villages participated in participatory assessments and some managed to raise funds to from government sources. One was able to prevent an outbreak of typhoid that affected all neighboring villages. As a result of the dramatic results of these projects, local government is very supportive of continued NGO activities in the region. Q 4/98

### **NGO Pioneers Integrated Education for Disabled Children in Central Asia**

Among a range of hurdles facing the disabled in Central is their complete isolation in the education system. NGO Baiastan works to provide support for disabled children in Naryn Oblast. They are Counterpart grantees and active participants in Consortium training and other programs of both the Bishkek and Naryn Support Centers. The NGO has developed strong collaborative relationships with government through roundtables and public education and has been very successful in leveraging this increased awareness into funding for their programs. They now work with four schools to provide integrated education for disabled children. An NGO in Uzbekistan has already begun to replicate this successful model. Q 4/98

### **NGO Advocacy Efforts Save Lives in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan**

Severe power shortages result in frequent complete black-outs in this town of 100,000 people. Even hospitals and other health care facilities are left without power, resulting in the death of several patients. At the request of its members, NGO Justice, a citizen advocacy organization, mounted a campaign to inform the public about the consequences of these black-outs and to lobby for a solution. As a result, local government acted quickly by changing policy to ensure that critical care facilities were not included in black-outs. Q 4/98

### **NGOs in Far Flung Villages Demonstrate Impact of Community Action**

Shamaldy-Sai village is located far from other towns in Jalalabad Oblast. It does not have access to current information on a regular basis. The Jalalabad NGO Support Center has provided support for a fledgling group of community leaders in their efforts to address some of the needs of their community through grassroots action. With consultation from Counterpart, the community development committee has already been able to repair the village school, rent a community outreach office, improve the school library, provide computer access for the first time and implement a food for work program. Donors include Peace Corps, Mercy Corps and the Soros Foundation. – all leveraged with training from Counterpart Consortium. Q 4/98

### **NGO Uses Fundraising Strategy to Implement Annual Workplan**

The NGO Sanitas, a Counterpart grantee and active participant in a range of Counterpart NGO support activities, develops an annual workplan and implements their activities according to a strategic planning process. When they requested consultation from Counterpart about a gap between their plans and annual budget, they participated in a Counterpart Fundraising training workshop. As a result of the new skills they learned in that training, the Board Members recognized their fundraising responsibilities and successfully raised funds to implement a planned annual event that provided holiday meals and entertainment for 60 people. Sanitas demonstrates dramatically strengthened organizational skills as a result of Counterpart Consortium support activities. Q 4/98

### *Association Catalyzes Social Partnerships, Expands Membership and Funding Base*

On March 24, 1998, the Association of Social Workers received a grant from Counterpart Consortium to train the staff of oblast, rayon and city government social welfare departments in new methods of providing community services to disabled, vulnerable and low-income groups within the framework of a poverty alleviation program. With on-going technical assistance from Counterpart, a team of trainers trained in community service delivery, project design and proposal writing for 5 months. Following are a number of impacts resulting from this activity:

- 12 newly established public foundations, centers and unions encompassing 150 people joined the Association, greatly expanding its membership base.
- The association has documented a dramatic increase in visits from beneficiaries seeking assistance in registration, charter development, project design and other issues.
- The association assisted in establishing a foster family home in the Issyk-Kul Oblast and "Sairagul" Non-Governmental Foundation, in which 15 low-income families have hot lunches every day.
- Four new NGOs are currently being registered at the Ministry of Justice to continue projects developed during ASW training.
- In addition, Counterpart has facilitated a partnership with the Russia-European Foundation and Rehab Medical Firm, funded by the Russian partner, the Mayor of Bishkek and the British Know-How Fund – a major step toward financial and programmatic sustainability for the Association. Q 3/98

### **Fledgling Private Housing Associations Share Regional Lessons Learned**

Large apartment buildings, formerly maintained through the centrally controlled Soviet system, are rapidly falling into disrepair. Although many have been privatized, new owners are not organized to advocate for the interests of tenants, improve housing conditions, control rent and utility payments and sign maintenance contracts. The Regional Association of Condominiums (RAC), funded with an initial support grant from Counterpart, has conducted a series of preliminary activities to promote the idea of private housing associations at the community level. One activity included a mini-internship with the Almaty, Kazakhstan Housing Association, a stronger and more experienced NGO. As a result of this activity, the RAC has established a strategic plan for future activities, strengthened ties with a similar association in the region and has gained new membership from three new privatized buildings. Q 3/98

### **NGO Spearheads Efforts to Foster Government Support for the Sector**

The Center of Women's Initiatives (CWI) in Talas realized that the critical barrier to NGO-government collaboration is the misunderstanding of the role of the NGO sector by government officials. To foster dialogue, CWI conducted a series of roundtables to engage local officials from village administrations, social welfare departments and other agencies in four districts of Talas oblast in summer 1998. The Talas Oblast Governor supported these efforts and Counterpart Consortium's NGO Support Center provided technical assistance. The first concrete impact has already been documented. The local government of the Bakay Ata Rayon is providing free premises to the Nuska Artisan Co-op. NGOs throughout Talas report much greater willingness to collaborate after the roundtables. Q3/98

### **Advocating for Individual Rights and Increasing Legal Awareness in Rural Kyrgyzstan**

NGO "Justice" promotes legal education and facilitates individual human rights abuse cases for international monitoring agencies. Their activities include publication of a newsletter called *Laws for Everybody*, regular appearances on TV and radio and frequent articles on human rights in print media. As a result of a meeting with the Democracy Development Foundation, the NGO received a \$12,997 grant, which was used to expand the NGO activities throughout the Jalal-Abad region. In 1997, the NGO defended the rights of 228 people. Since January 1998, the group has published 250 copies of a newsletter, *Laws for Everybody*, designed to improve the level of legal awareness of the population and encourage the development of democracy. Q 3/98

### **Water Users Association Leads Integrated Democratic Community Development**

As a result of the work of Osh Oblast NGO "Ata-Jurt", residents in Sara-Bulak village now have a plumbing system that provides 2,000 residents with clean drinking water. (The only previous water source was a nearby river.)

- 100% of the necessary funds were raised from local governing bodies and community contributions.
- Ata-Jurt helped villagers establish a five-member water resources board to monitor utilization of the plumbing system and provided training to the Board in the operation and maintenance of the system.
- System upkeep will be funded by a system of monthly water use fees.

Counterpart has provided on-going support to Ata-Jurt, including access to training workshops, one-on-one technical assistance and grant support. In addition, Counterpart has just facilitated and funded a partnership between Ata-Jurt and the International Secretariat for Water, a Canadian organization. This partnership will further strengthen this NGO's ability to create democratic systems for community water management in Central Asia and foster linkages with other water users associations around the world through ISW's extensive grassroots network. Q 3/98

### **Advocacy on Behalf of Chernobyl Clean-up Workers Mobilizes Community Development**

The disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station in 1986 affected the health of thousands of people participating in the cleanup activities, including a sizeable group from Nookat Region in Kyrgyzstan. The Nookat Association of Chernobyl Workers was created in January 1995 and has been an active participant in Counterpart Consortium programs since then – including a start-up grant of \$750 for training and creating jobs for clean up workers. Since its inception, the Association has diversified its funding base with a grant from UNDP for micro-credit lending and now generates income from a variety of small businesses and rental income. Experience in project design and fundraising helped “Chernobyl” to diversify its fundraising activities. Counterpart support helped “Chernobyl” become a valued partner in community development. Now, Chernobyl actively participates in planning of the local budget for allocating funds to match community needs and is targeted for a sizeable allocation (the equivalent of \$15,000 in local currency) from the local government budget to continue their community development work. Q 3/98

### ***Localized Legal Education and Consulting Services Support Legal Reform***

The low level of legal awareness and inadequate development of legal reforms in the Osh Oblast promoted the establishment of the Fund of Legal Reform Support. The NGO conducts seminars on legal reform, and NGO taxation issues, provides individual consultation services and publishes a monthly newsletter called “NGOs, Citizens, Laws”. This NGO is an active participant in Counterpart Consortium training and networking activities and has received two small grants. The NGO now has 4 permanent staff and a well-equipped office and provides legal support for the Osh Oblast NGO community. In 1997-98, 200 people received consulting services on legal issues and 60 NGO representatives attended training in NGO legislation. Q 3/98

### **NGO Advocacy Efforts Result in Integrated Education for Disabled Children**

There are 170 disabled children in Naryn who cannot attend schools due to various physical and/or mental disabilities. NGO Bayastan, established in Naryn in 1997, focuses on education integration, including research, advocacy and educational programs. Bayastan has been an active participant in a broad range of Counterpart support programs, including training, on-going consultations and a small grant. With funding support from another donor, Bayastan leadership participated in a workshop in India focused on integrated public school education methodology. After they returned, they integrated this information into a round table organized by the Counterpart NGO Support Center in Naryn that included attendees from local education and health ministries. Combined with additional advocacy efforts, Bayastan has convinced local officials to establish a special committee, including government officials, teachers, NGO and community leaders. The committee will guide integration of disabled children into three schools and two kindergartens as a pilot project in the oblast. Q 3/98

### **Former Counterpart Consortium Tolerance Education Program Successfully Localized**

54% of the population and 80 ethnic groups are concentrated in southern Kyrgyzstan – the site of interethnic conflict in 1991 that demonstrated the need for tolerance education. After completion of a Tolerance Education and Conflict Transformation Project funded by UNHCR and managed by Counterpart, project staff formed “Harmony and Tolerance” to localize and sustain tolerance education in Kyrgyzstan.

Counterpart Consortium continues to provide assistance in the form of consulting services in localization issues, training, Internet and e-mail services. UNHCR is providing funding support. The NGO has conducted 28 seminars in interactive methods for 1105 teachers, college and high school students in two oblasts, translated 5 publications into 4 local languages and distributed them free of charge to all schools in Kyrgyzstan. Recently, the NGO signed a contract with UNHCR to provide a series of seminars to introduce their model in Ukraine. They are also working with the Red Cross to establish a regional tolerance education project in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan. Q 3/98



### **Official Acknowledgement of the Existence of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence, a serious problem in the Kyrgyz Republic, is more difficult to solve due to the effect of strong cultural biases against discussing or acting on this sensitive matter. Since 1997, with support from Counterpart and HIVOS, the Umut Crisis Center has provided confidential shelter for 152 victims of domestic violence. 200 women have received professional counseling in coping strategies from a psychologist or consultation about how to pursue their legal rights from a lawyer. 551 women were advised through a telephone hot line. Women's issues become a focus of public attention due to the actions undertaken by this NGO. As a result of "Umut" Crisis Center's outreach and visibility, the government created a National Program on Women's Issues to address the problems surrounding domestic violence and hearings about domestic violence and related issues were held before Parliament. Q2/98

### **Job Training Integrates Refugee and Resident to Address Unemployment**

Unemployment in Kyrgyzstan has risen drastically since the breakup of the former Soviet Union resulting in the loss of skills and low self-esteem for many of the long-term unemployed. In order to address the needs of the unemployed and refugees in the Jayl Rayon, the Job Seekers Club of Kara-Balta is providing job search skills, support groups and job placement services. Funded by a Counterpart support grant and still in the implementation phase, 32 trainees have already learned marketable skills in sewing and computer operation. Future groups will be trained as tractor drivers and electricians and relationships with local enterprises and businesses are improving dramatically in the contact of job placement efforts. Q2/98

### **Vocational Training Center for Disabled Teenagers Mobilizes Community Involvement**

The disabled – and especially children - face severe marginalization in all facets of life, including family unwillingness to acknowledge their presence in public due to the severe societal stigma placed on families with disabled children. When older children are no longer eligible for minimal State support, they have no marketable skills and usually cannot find jobs. With a small grant from Counterpart and other skills developed in Counterpart training and technical assistance programs, the Vocational Training Center was established less than one year ago, and has already demonstrated solid impact. For example:

- Parents and children report increased self-esteem and awareness of legal rights and are participating in visible public events, concerts, fundraisers and demonstrations.
- A local businessman is now a regular contributor of his time, skill and financial resources.
- Advocacy efforts have resulted in the opening of a State-funded vocational training center.
- Increased attention from mass media and international supporters has increased public recognition and enabled the Center to begin strengthening linkages with the Department of Education. Q2/98

### **NGO Forum Increases Sector's Visibility, Recognition from Government and Acknowledgement of the Value of Coalitions**

Local NGOs and government acknowledge the impact of several fledgling initiatives with strong social and political resonance in the community organized by the Kyrgyzstan NGO Forum chaired by Center InterBilim. Facilitation of independent observers in district parliamentary elections was a first for the oblast. Although controversial, this event was a strong demonstration of the importance of being familiar with one's legal rights. The forum also submitted an appeal to the President of the Republic regarding the infringement of journalists' human rights. This appeal played an important role in resolving a conflict between government officials and journalists that received news coverage in the international press.

Members of the Forum's Coordination Committee, deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) and members from the Association of Lawyers of Kyrgyzstan developed a consolidated draft NGO law, combining three existing drafts. NDI, INCL and INTRAC representatives were also invited to provide outside expertise. These efforts will continue toward the end goal of passage of a new NGO law.

The forum is broadening its scope by including rural NGO coalitions to provide them with support and learn from their successful efforts. Rural NGO coalitions have requested assistance in capacity building (through training, consultations, joint activities and information exchange). They also reported that as the Forum becomes stronger, it attracts greater interest from government and lends greater credibility to their efforts and to the NGO sector at large. Q1/98

#### **Environment Education and Activism Mobilized Through Student Activism**

Involving youth in changing societal attitudes toward solving ecological is a powerful avenue for increased democratization. As a result of workshops held by BIOM Youth Ecological Movement, a student task force was formed to involve students and faculty in improving environmental education efforts. Many students from rural areas will return to their villages upon graduation, so a coordinating body and the newsletter they publish are popular services with widespread impact. As a result of the efforts outlined above, two small ecological clubs solicited donations of over 100 saplings used in the Frunze Forest.

BIOM efforts have spurred a significant increase in media coverage of environmental issues. BIOM had assembled a video/audio archive and has obtained media coverage in Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – as well as in Kyrgyzstan. Several programs were aired on the Youth Television Channel to encourage increased involvement in environmental issues.

As a result of BIOM's active work, including acknowledged impacts resulting from the Consortium-funded project, a number of international organizations (World Bank, Frederick Ebert, Conrad Adenauer and Soros Foundations) and local businesses (KyrgyzKRAMDS Bank, Areopag, AkylinvestBank) financed EcoForum, an Ecological NGO Conference for all Kyrgyz environmental groups. This indicates broad international support for BIOM's efforts – as well as increasing attention for environmental activities on the part of local business, government and the citizenry. Q1/98

#### **NGO, Consumers and Government Officials Collaborate in Highly Visible Policy Forum**

Aikyn Consumer Rights' Protection Association conducted a conference on consumers' rights protection on March 13, 1998 in Bishkek. Participants, including local officials, submitted requests to Parliament to adopt a Code of Administrative responsibility and an implementation plan for the existing Law on Consumers' Rights Protection. Participants also appealed for local governments to support the consumer advocacy movement by participating in dialogue and supporting the development of a strong enabling environment. One of the most significant aspects of this half-day conference is that it was co-sponsored by the Anti-monopoly Committee which is chaired by a member of Parliament. Counterpart has provided on-going assistance to Aikyn, including training, technical assistance and grant support. Q1/98

#### **Reducing Crime through Constructive Engagement of Neighborhood Youth**

The Dilgir Children's Creative Foundation serves an outlying suburb of Bishkek where the majority of the population consists of young families with a large number of children and teenagers. Lack of productive activities for youth resulted in an increase in petty crime and delinquency in the area. The children and youth in the micro-district often lacked constructive ways to spend their time resulting in small crime and problems in the area. Formed in 1996, the Foundation trained 128 members of 8 existing youth clubs. As a result, one club was invited to an international festival in Turkey. Other clubs organized televised performances and cultural exhibitions. Many of the parents, as well as the community, have acknowledged the beneficial influence of "Dilgir" on their children. Q4/97

### **NGO "Bayastan"-Naryn**

"Bayastan" was created and registered in March 1997. The first project initiated by "Bayastan" is to transport 10 disabled children to school. Leader Ms. T. Shamuratova stressed that "Bayastan" is going to use a bus for transportation. The main issue was whether disabled children will attend classes together with other children or if it is necessary to organize separate classes for the children. "Bayastan" collected money for the disabled children through a media campaign asking for donations. The total sum of the donations exceeded 18,000 soms (\$1,000). The money will be spent to implement above-mentioned project. The Naryn NGO Support Center provides "Bayastan" with consulting services and access to a copy machine, fax machine, e-mail, and telephone. Q4/97

### **Fledgling Coalition of Environmental NGOs and Activists**

A conference to encourage the Eco-Forum was organized with the help of the World Bank, and it follows an Eco-Forum that Counterpart funded over a year ago. The Minister of Environmental Protection, Bokonbaev, spoke at the conference encouraging NGOs to take an active role in the environmental problems facing Kyrgyzstan. He suggested projects to restore woodlands and to enforce the protection of species of wildlife should be implemented by NGOs. He mentioned that NGOs have the right by law to get information from the state which could help them determine needs and develop useful projects. Several persons familiar to Counterpart spoke on the issue of developing an association of Eco-NGOs. Erkin Kasybekov, a GTD graduate, spoke of the importance of an effective board of directors along with the need to collaborate with State bodies. Vadim Nee, who works with ICNL of the Counterpart Consortium, discussed his experience with associations on the legal sphere and made recommendations for the development of this association. Q4/97

### **NGO "Tendesh"**

"Tendesh" was created and registered in March 1997. The members of the NGO "Tendesh" have created the Women's Crisis Center to provide support for women whose rights have been violated. This Crisis Center is providing clients with legal, psychological and medical consultations. The lawyer, the psychologist and the doctor are working for the Center as volunteers, in addition to their main occupation. The Center can provide women with temporary space for living (2 places). The members of "Tendesh" have registered more than 100 women as clients of the Crisis Center. The clients are 17-70 years old. The doctor at "Tendesh" stressed that most of her clients are suffering from a lack of medicine and awareness of family planning. The initial stage of opening the Crisis Center was implemented with the support from Soros Foundation. The Naryn Counterpart NGO Support Center provides "Tendesh" with consulting and such facilities as copy machine, fax machine, e-mail, telephone. This NGO is one of the most active users of services in the Naryn Center. Q4/97

### **Refugee group Tash-Bulak VI.**

The Jalal-Abad NGO Support Center's staff is dealing with a project concerning the construction of a water pipeline in Tash-Bulak VI., Bazar-Korgon Rayon. Beneficiaries of this project are the village residents, mostly refugees and internal migrants. The Manager Nurmamat Saparbaev met several times with the IOM representatives and Rayon officials. The agenda of those meetings was to discuss the idea and details of the project. It was decided that IOM will support the project and will transfer \$18,000 for the materials. Bazar-Korgon Akimiat will be responsible for the working staff. Q4/97

### **Center InterBilim and Forum of NGOs**

Center InterBilim is one of the most active NGOs in Kyrgyzstan. The "Forum of NGOs" is a national association of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan that was organized after Counterpart's 1995 conference "NGOs and the Law." *In elections held for empty parliament seats the Forum and Center InterBilim were responsible for organizing and training election observers.* The observers, who were all members of NGOs, ensured that all electoral regulations were followed. As a result, the election was declared invalid due to the low number of voters (less than 50%). Q4/97

### **Environmental Club Successfully Lobbies for Stronger Enforcement in Protected Areas**

The Baychechekey Environmental Club in Kara-Balta, Kyrgyzstan focuses on maintenance and stronger enforcement of regulations protecting the Apple Canyon Natural Preserve. Building on enthusiasm after a successful clean-up and reforestation activity, the club submitted a proposal to the government authorities to improve environmental protection in the state preserves. As a result, the government now prohibits hunting, equipped recreation areas, made informational signs concerning rules in the preserves, and limited admission for protecting Kyrgyzstan's nature. Q4/97

### **Participation in International Campaign Improves Public Health Awareness**

Smoke-Free Kyrgyzstan distributes information about the health hazards of smoking. Its published brochures have been a great success. Many organizations dealing with similar problems used them for their training and promotional goals, for example the "Sanitas" NGO. Financed by a Counterpart grant, the NGO produced videotapes and films, which were shown at a conference, organized by the Soros Foundation and the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Institute. Not only the Kyrgyzstan public at large learned about the Smoke-Free Kyrgyzstan's project, "Quit Smoking and Win," but also the conference's participants from the European program, "Europa Without Tobacco." As a result, the leader, Chinara Bekbasarova, was invited to Finland to participate in a conference, and the Kyrgyz Republic had a representative in the "Quit and Win - 1998" International Campaign. Q4/97

### **Income Generation Project Integrates Refugees into a Community**

Khairinisso NGO provides support to unemployed rural people, including refugee women, in a small Kyrgyz village with a high percentage of Tajik refugees. After developing project implementation skills and stronger official contacts during a school repair project using NGO volunteers, the Counterpart NGO Support Center in Naryn facilitated contact between Khairinisso and another NGO in Bishkek that is a UNDP implementing partner. As a result, the NGO will establish a small bakery in space provided by local government and funded by UNDP. Q4/97

### **Volunteer Involvement in Environmental Education is Formalized by Government Decree**

Sanitas Humanitarian and Charitable Foundation of Kyrgyzstan has developed a database of over 500 volunteers who have conducted more than 600 lectures and seminars concerning anti-drug information and healthy lifestyles. Based on the success of this volunteer initiative, the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issued a decree supporting the integration of Sanitas' program into the official school curriculum. Sanitas also provides seminars for teachers and even anti-drug police to raise their knowledge for use in their professions. Q3/97

### **Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan**

With a Counterpart grant of \$500, along with support from other international and local organizations, the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan's project called "Youth Camp for Young Leaders" took place on Lake Issyk-Kul on July 16-24. The 28 participants, between the ages of 14 and 17, learned about the structure and activities of the National Society of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Every day the young leaders worked in small groups and reenacted simulation exercises and games. The youth saw in themselves a new light and with unexpected qualities while participating in seminars which developed their skills to become volunteers for the Youth Red Crescent Society. Each of them identified an area for future volunteer work within the Society. The camp addressed the Society's lack of connection with youth in Kyrgyzstan. Due to the seminars, the youth will be able to show support for elderly without families, orphans, and disseminate the ideas and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent. *Kyrgyzstan now has a core movement for the Youth Red Crescent Society, as seen from the meetings and the work of the youth after the camp in planning future volunteer efforts* in supporting, emotionally and psychologically, the orphans of Bishkek. Q3/97

### **Fundraising and Public Awareness Through the Media in Rural Kyrgyzstan**

Uniting about 140 families from the city of Jalal-Abad who have disabled children, Aksanaa figures indicate that there are more than 3,500 disabled children in the Jalal-Abad Oblast. With new skills gained through participation in Counterpart training seminars, the first activity of this fledgling group raised more than 100,000 soms to support the provision of medical care for more than 100 disabled children through a televised appeal for donations. 100% of the proceeds were used for the direct benefit of the children. Q3/97

### **Junior Achievement**

With a grant from Counterpart Consortium, Junior Achievement of Kyrgyzstan lead five training workshops in Bishkek and one training workshop each in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Kara-Kol entitled "Applied Economics for Young People." Participants were given certificates to teach students the program in their schools in order to pass onto students around the country the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of entrepreneurship and the free market. The goals are to increase the quality of economics education and to decrease unemployment among young people. Junior Achievement also arranges for local business leaders to lead applied economic courses or clubs in the schools, organizes a city-wide competition in model economics and management for students as well as for economic teachers, and has begun to translate all of their materials into Kyrgyz. Q3/97

### **Women Refugees Take Initiative in School Repair**

The repair of the secondary school in the Kara-Dobo VI was completed in September in time for the first day of class. From the 64 refugee families in this village, a group of refugee women highlighted the need for repairing the secondary school. It was decided that UNHCR through Counterpart's Kara-Balta NGO Support Center and the Jayl Administration would co-fund the repair of the school (85,000 and 40,000 soms respectively were donated). This project represents an example of how government and community groups can work together to solve community problems. Q3/97

### **Private Sector – NGO Collaboration for Environmental Protection**

With a Counterpart Consortium small grant and new skills gained through participation in training workshops, the environmental NGO Baychechekey is just beginning a project to clean up a local nature preserve as part of a children's summer camp curriculum. This project was funded as a corporate challenge grant leveraging the support of a local company. This effort is one of the first NGO projects to receive local private sector support. Q3/97

### **NGO Spurs Collaboration with Local Government to Reduce Unemployment**

Jez Oymok was founded by a group of unemployed women to find practical solutions to rural unemployment. With an agreement with the local Labor Administration, the group is conducting a series of seminars. The importance of this activity is that a rural NGO and local government took joint action to reduce the number of unemployed in the Panfilov Rayon. It is a small initial step but though such actions local NGOs and local government may show the way for future cooperation. NGO leadership has participated in a number of training workshops and utilized other services of the Kara-Balta NGO Support Center. Q3/97.

### **Disability NGO "Bayastan" - Naryn**

Within three months of registration as an NGO, Bayastan conducted a successful media campaign that solicited almost \$1,000 in donations to fund their first project. The mission of Bayastan is to encourage the integration of disabled children in mainstream schools. The funds raised will support transportation costs of a group of disabled children to attend classes at a local school. Q3/97

### **BIOM Youth Ecological Movement**

The "New Horizons" Program of Leadership for rayon ecological organizations in Kyrgyzstan targeted college students in Bishkek to be trained within 9 months. The major accomplishments of the project were

providing organizational and program support for the development of rural ecological NGOs and initiative groups among high school and college students in Bishkek. The groups focus on ecological knowledge, democratization, and the creation of "BIOM" branches in the Jalal-Abad and Naryn Oblasts. The organization established and maintains contact with other ecological NGOs in Central Asia, Europe and the US. Within the project period, "BIOM" organized five round tables, 12 training workshops for the leaders of youth ecological NGOs, and published 6 issues of "BIOM" Newsletter (the circulation of the newsletter is 500 copies). Q3/97

**Women's NGO "Tendesh" - Naryn**

The "Tendesh" was created and registered in March 1997. The members of the NGO "Tendesh" have created the Women's Crisis Center to provide support for the women whose rights have been violated. This crisis center is providing clients with legal, psychological and medical consultations. The center has a lawyer, a psychologist and a doctor who are working for the center as volunteers, in addition to their main occupation. The center can provide women with two temporary living spaces. The members of "Tendesh" have registered more than 100 women as clients of the Crisis Center. The clients are 17-70 years old; all of them have problems in their private and public life. The crisis center doctor stressed that most of her clients are suffering from a lack of medicine and awareness of family planning. The initial stage of opening the crisis center was implemented with support from Soros Foundation. The Naryn Counterpart NGO Support Center provides "Tendesh" with consulting services and access to a copy machine, fax machine, e-mail, and a telephone. This NGO is one of the most active users of the services that the Naryn Center provides. Q3/97

## TAJIKISTAN

### **NGO “Fidokor” Promotes New Methods of Interactive Teaching in Secondary Schools**

To increase the quality of the education in Khatlon Oblast, an area greatly affected by conflict, *Fidokor*, through the USAID and UNHCR-funded Tolerance Education Program, trained 500 teachers from 250 schools in interactive teaching methodology. Representatives of the local education departments were involved in the project as well. Recent monitoring visits indicated a 28-30% increase in students' attendance in participating schools. Additionally, representatives of Education Departments in 13 districts officially applied to *Fidokor* to train teachers at schools not previously covered by the project. Q 1/00

### **NGO Newspaper Helps People to Make Choices in Elections**

A lack of impartial information about Parliamentary candidates during the 2000 pre-election months was a serious barrier to voter choice. To address the problem, the Association of Journalists for Social Partnership, a Counterpart target NGO, published extensive information about all six political parties in two issues of its monthly newspaper – the only source of non-partisan information about political candidates in the country. More than 8,000 people received copies distributed at Candidate Forums. According to the Central Election Committee, in 78 polling stations where the newspaper was distributed opposition parties received 7-8% more votes than they did in other polling stations. Q 1/00

### **Local Private Donors Join NGO's Efforts to Help Disabled Children**

6,000 disabled children living in the Khatlon region are not adequately supported by bankrupt State health structures. NGO Umed, a Counterpart trainee, has successfully obtained \$2,500 in private sector in-kind support to establish a treatment center that is now providing pro-bono treatment for 20 children per month. In addition, Umed has received cash donations of \$900 to pay for food for patients. Q 1/00

### **NGO “Jahon” Expands its Human Rights Training to Militia in Dushanbe**

Since the Civil War cases of human rights' abuse by law-enforcement employees increased – especially in the capital. The NGO *Jahon*, with support from Counterpart Consortium, conducted a series of seminars on Human Rights for 150 high ranking officials in Khatlon and Khojand oblasts. Based on their success, the Dushanbe City Ministry of Internal Affairs is receiving similar training from Jahon, funded by the Soros Foundation. High level officials will facilitate the training and *Jahon's* members will participate as experts. NGO *Jahon* is planning to conduct a series of meeting and roundtables with the Ministry of Internal Affairs Leadership in order to spread the experience throughout the country. Q 1/00

### **NGO's Efforts Increase the Number of Women in Parliament in Tajikistan**

The former Tajik Parliament included one five women – just 2.5% of the total deputy seats. Before the Presidential and Parliamentary elections seven active women NGOs started an advocacy campaign to improve the status of women in society. A series of roundtables were conducted with the participation of Government officials, President's Office and leaders of six main political parties. The idea has been promoted also through the mass media. As a result, the President of Tajikistan issued an edict “ On measures to improve of the status of women in Society.” As a result, 11 female deputies were elected – a significant increase from the previous parliament. Q 1/00

### **Local NGO Contributes Resolving Conflicts Between Armed Groups In Gorno - Badakhshan**

During the last five years, 15 clashes between rival armed factions in Khorog City have injured or killed 50 people and contribute to overall civil unrest and instability. NGO *Volunteer*, a Counterpart grantee and target NGO that consists of 500 young people throughout the oblast, has been actively involved with government agencies to resolve conflicts acting as a mediator between the armed groups. Since 1999 the members of this NGO have prevented 5 armed clashes by bringing opposing together at negotiations. Q 1/00

### **NGOs Unite to Engage Government to Address Violence against Women in Tajikistan**

18 NGOs, most of whom are active participants in a number of Counterpart Consortium activities, met at a roundtable hosted by the NGO *Nidoi Asr* to focus on the issue of violence against women in Tajikistan. They identified lack of government awareness of and interest in the problem and the need for NGOs to present a united front as the priority issues to be addressed. As a result of this meeting, participants agreed to create a Consultation Council of NGOs on Violence Against Women to develop a concept paper and lead efforts to engage the government and speak with a united voice to better influence policy. Q 4/99

### **Khatlon Oblast Newspaper Provides Regular Coverage About NGOs And Their Activities**

In Tajikistan, particularly in remote areas, there are very few sources of information through which the population can learn about NGOs. With a grant and on-going targeted assistance from Counterpart, the Tajikistan *Association of Journalists for Social Partnership* has conducted a series of round tables on NGO issues with representatives of local NGOs, government and journalists. As a result, the only official regional newspaper for Khatlon Oblast now offers a regular monthly feature about NGOs that reaches 2 million people in the region most affected by recent civil conflict. Q 4/99

### **NGO Engages Mass Media to Increase Awareness of Civil Society in Northern Tajikistan**

The activities of local NGOs were not making the news in Khojand – the second biggest city in Tajikistan. After attending Counterpart Consortium's workshop "Education Through the Mass Media" the NGO *Harmony Club* signed an agreement with the independent TV station "SM-1" to jointly prepare a TV program series on what NGOs are doing in Tajikistan. This TV program on NGO issues is the first and only TV program sponsored by the private sector in Tajikistan. "SM-1," a member of NANSMIT (National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan), is the most popular TV company serving Khojand and neighboring districts, with more than 200,000 viewers. The NGO *Harmony Club* is a strong group of experienced professionals in the areas of social services and media and has been conducting programming for women and families in the Khojand area. These TV programs resulted in a 13% increase in the number of the visitors to *Harmony Club*. Counterpart has supplied both training and technical assistance to this NGO. Q 4/99

### **Advocacy Campaign Gains Broad Official Support To Increase Women's Leadership Roles**

Continued civil unrest has worsened the status of women in Tajikistan. Fewer hold leadership positions in legislative and executive branches. The NGO *Orzu*, a Counterpart grantee, has spearheaded an advocacy campaign to increase women's leadership by instituting a quota system in parliament. The campaign included a series of roundtables with members of Parliament, government representatives, President's office representatives and the leaders of six political parties, and a media campaign to mobilize public opinion. As a result, the President of Tajikistan issued an edict "On measures to increase the status of women in the society" and the main political parties agreed to include women to the list of their candidates in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Women of Tajikistan will also be represented in the leading positions of various government institutions. Q 4/99

### **Visible Role in Election Monitoring Enables Tajikistan NGO to Advocate for Constituency**

As a result of past successes and improved skills, the director of Counterpart grantee *Adabsaro* was able to develop a working relationship with the Mayor of Dushanbe, who appointed her to serve as an election monitor in the upcoming presidential election. She utilized this access to point out a number of specific problems facing the population of the poor inner-city area targeted by her organization. As a result, a number of basic improvements were made in the public services available to almost 400 IDP families. Telephone lines were installed, a district medical clinic was funded and a bus route was redirected to pass through the area. Q 4/99



### **Ministry of Internal Affairs Includes NGO Human Rights Training In Y2k Training Curriculum**

Continued civil unrest has resulted in very high turnover among government officials at all levels. Many of them, especially in the police force, commit frequent human rights abuses, due in part to a lack of awareness of democracy and basic human rights tenets. Over the past year, NGO *Jahon* has conducted 6 workshops for 120 high-ranking officials in Khatlon oblast. These seminars have received very favorable reviews from government officials and the public. As a result, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has included the NGO curriculum in their own internal training program that will train low and mid-level officials in various divisions through FY 2000. The workshops will be conducted by militia officers that participated in the NGO workshops, trained with the support of Counterpart Consortium contract trainers. Q 4/99

### **NGO, Government and TASIF Collaborate to Pilot Model Grassroots Health Care Reform**

An innovative model Family Medical and Training Clinic has been established by the City of Dushanbe Health Office, the Tajikistan Social Investment Fund (TASIF) and the NGO *Avesto*, an active participant in a range of Counterpart Consortium activities and a current grantee. TASIF is financing the renovation of the facilities with funding from the Government of Tajikistan and the World Bank. The City Health Office is staffing the Centers with certified personnel. *Avesto* is serving as the managing partner and facilitator of community-based education and training activities. In addition to access to improved medical care, this clinic is being considered a replicable model that will be included as an option for planned nationwide health care reform. The innovative practices being implemented here were pioneered in a partnership between a family medical center in Boulder Colorado and a hospital in Dushanbe. Q 4/99

### **NGO Creates Jobs For Rural Women Supporting Disabled Family Members**

Unemployment is especially high among women who support families with disabled children, many of whom are unable to work outside of the home. Government support payments have decreased dramatically, compounding the effect on these women and their families. The NGO *Union of Women-Entrepreneurs* from Khojand (a Counterpart target NGO) identified women maintaining disabled in rural areas of Khojand District and is addressing this problem by providing at-home piece work for this group of vulnerable women. When the blankets and mattresses they make are sold, the NGO uses the proceeds to purchase food for program participants. As a result more than 50 women had a regular job and income for their families. Q 4/99

### **Social Partnership Enables Tajikistan Refugee Children to Attend New School in their own Neighborhood**

For almost 3 years, NGO *Umed* has been working with a squatter community of 120 refugee families headed primarily by widowed women in a rural district outside Dushanbe. The children of these families faced a long walk, harassment along the road, and community resistance in the distant school they were forced to attend because there was no school in their settlement. Most of the children refused to attend classes and risked falling through the cracks of the system. *Umed* facilitated a series of meetings between the women and local district officials. As a result, the City Education Office has agreed to provide the equipment needed for a local school. The community will be responsible for providing a teacher. Q 4/99

### **NGO Fosters Establishment of Private Housing Cooperative in Tajikistan**

Conditions in the majority of high density, cinder-block apartment high rises in central Dushanbe have almost completely deteriorated. Most are without utilities, garbage collection services and some have even collapsed. Crime, disease and other community problems are rampant. Counterpart Consortium grantee *Zan wa Zamin* has helped the residents of one such building organize to undertake a solution to their living situation. Residents have formed a building committee, identified skilled volunteers and secured tenant agreements to pay a fee to fund repairs and new services. This innovative success has been publicized on television and will be used by a large scale housing association as a model to replicate their own efforts. Q 4/99

### **Soldier-to-Soldier: A Difficult Linkage Begins**

After nearly two years of encouragement by Counterpart Consortium, Counterpart International Headquarters and Counterpart's NGO Support Center in Khojand, a bridge between the US *National Association of Concerned Veterans (NACV)* and the Tajikistan local NGO *Union of Afghan War Veterans* was established. The Khojand NGO Support Center provided services to the local NGO, including: consultation, training, tutoring and computer access, e-mail use, FAX service, English translation and mediation services -- to help them to identify their common interests and establish relations between the groups. As a result, two representatives of the *Union of Afghan War Veterans* have been invited to visit the USA/Washington office of NACV, with the purpose to better understand their respective missions, activities and achievements, share and exchange experience and to discuss future relationships. Q 3/99

### **NGO and Makhalla Leaders Collaborate in Community Based Conflict Resolution in Tajikistan**

A recent outbreak of violence in Gulbutta Makhalla, an under-served low-income area on the outskirts of Dushanbe, created tension, anger and fear of continued violence. Although the family of an arrested man requested his release due to lack of evidence, militia officials feared that his release would spur more violence. Because of their established reputation, NGO *Umed* was asked to help by accepting custody of the soon to be released prisoner. *Umed* facilitated a meeting of community leaders who agreed to form a Council of Elders to decide this and future community disputes. The prisoner was released to the joint custody of *Umed* and the Council of Elders of the Makhalla and the Council also agreed to hear and discuss the original neighbor dispute that led to the altercation. NGO *Umed*, a Counterpart grantee, Counterpart Conflict Resolution and Team Building training workshops as especially useful in providing them with the skills needed to facilitate a community-based solution to this problem. Q 3/99

### **NGO Promotes Volunteerism in Tajikistan**

Counterpart grantee, *Adamiyat* (humanity) provides a variety of essential services to indigent elderly in Dushanbe, including food, clothing and medical support. This NGO has made significant progress to become sustainable through a multi-faceted effort. *Adamiyat* provided over 1,200 elderly people with medical and food assistance through their facility in downtown Dushanbe under contract with international organizations. However, there are many other elderly without access to this assistance. The NGO trained 16 full time volunteers to deliver the services to the elderly directly. To date volunteers have delivered food, medicine, cleaning services and other needed assistance to over 200 homebound elderly. Each volunteer wears a badge certifying him or her as a Volunteer of *Adamiyat*, even when they visit government agencies on behalf of their constituents. Government officials are beginning to recognize *Adamiyat's* volunteers as spokespersons for their elderly clients and are beginning to respond in a positive and responsible manner. Q 3/99

### **NGO in Khatlon Challenges Government and Citizens to Solve Marital Registry Issues.**

A growing problem in southern Tajikistan is the increased number of unregistered marriages. In most instances, women are not aware of the rights they are waiving by entering into an unofficial marriage -- forgoing any legal status or claim to a husband's assets and denying children proper registration status to receive state-supported services. The NGO *Khana-i-Umed* (House of Hope) was established to increase awareness of this issue. With support and training from Counterpart and the Kughan-teppa Support Center, the NGO has implemented a pilot project to provide training and consultations to 500 women and local officials, on women's rights, spouse disappearance, divorce registration and property claim issues. This is the first time that this issue has been raised publicly in the Khatlon Oblast. The NGO is planning to reach out to more women in 6 districts of Khatlon Oblast, using their volunteers in each district to conduct workshops. Q 3/99

### **Association of Journalists Branches Out**

Created as a result of journalists' participation in the Issyk-Kul Conference on Social Partnership, the NGO *Association of Journalists of Tajikistan -- Social Partnership* conducted three workshops, several round tables and a nationwide conference on partner relationships between different sectors of Tajik society. About 100 local journalists took part in these events. As a consequence, two new branches of the Association were organized -- in Khojand and Khorog -- and the overall number of members of the association increased by 26. These journalists tell others NGO success stories, and their relationships with other sectors in dealing with the problems of creating a civil society. This increase in membership has stimulated an increase in the number of articles on NGO activities published in local media by roughly three times compared to the same period last year. The Association has now started to publish its own newsletter "3+1," the first newsletter devoted to covering the activities and impacts of NGOs in Tajikistan. The Association is a current grantee of Counterpart Consortium and has received extensive training and technical assistance from Counterpart Tajikistan. Q 3/99

### **Grassroots NGO Fosters Housing Associations in Dushanbe, Tajikistan**

Lack of municipal services, compounded by urban migration have resulted in rapidly worsening basic health conditions in high rise apartment buildings throughout Dushanbe and other cities in Tajikistan. Most have no existing community structures to lead residents to affect their own solutions. After attending Counterpart training, a group of environmental enthusiasts formed an NGO so that they could address the problem from a position of authority. NGO *Zan wa Zamin* (Women and Earth) has designed a strategy to build community associations in the high rise apartment buildings and have already helped residents of five buildings begin working together to clean and maintain public spaces in and around their apartments. Empowered by this initial success, they are working to facilitate creation of a Central District Housing Association, linking individual apartment committees into a coalition. Q 3/99

### **Improving Public Trust and Accountability of Civil Servants in Northern Tajikistan**

The Executive Director of the Union of Women Entrepreneurs, a Counterpart target NGO, has been appointed head of a newly established Monitoring Commission including members from government, NGOs and the private sector to stimulate reforms and improvements in the Government-based law-enforcement systems and to foster citizen advocacy. The commission was formed to address lax law-enforcement, infringement of civil rights, and extensive corruption among law enforcement officials. The lack of a credible official response to solving these problems has damaged public morale and contributes to a cycle of lawlessness. Announcements of follow-up action, weekly meetings and regular media coverage is already resulting in improved public confidence and reports of lessened civil rights violations and tensions at roadblocks. This highly visible collaboration between the Government and NGOs to improve and advance the peace process and the development of civil society is recognized by many in local Government and the public as a positive step towards achieving a more participatory, democratic and civil society in Tajikistan. Q 3/99

### **Returnees and Military Solve Problems**

The problems of refugees and displaced people returning to their homes and attempting to recover their lives are an ongoing concern in Tajikistan. A major factor in resolving problems and issues that stands in the way of integration has been a lack of understanding of the laws and the roles of those in the law enforcement sector. The local NGO *Murod* is conducting training to law enforcement supervisors and personnel in the Khatlon Oblast as part of an AED/GTD initiative. The NGO has conducted several workshops that focus on the problems related to reintegration and how they might best be resolved under the existing laws. These trainings were well received by the participants, who felt they all benefited greatly from the sessions and that they facilitated their efforts to resolve problems and come up with realistic solutions. Q 3/99

### **Broadcasters Association Transcends Narrow Focus and Expands**

The Association of National Electronic Mass Media (ANESMI), established in 1995, has undergone a self-driven metamorphosis that, among other issues, allows and encourages the membership and participation of non-broadcast media. At inception, the association had 17 members representing non-governmental electronic (broadcast) media. As a result of Association Development training from Counterpart, the NGO realized that in order to serve the greatest constituency and have the greatest impact, it had to expand its membership to include other print media. Renamed the National Association of Independent Mass Media of Tajikistan, NANSMIT has 24 collective members with a total outreach of more than 700 people. Q 3/99

### **NGOs Open-up Restricted Areas**

There is very little NGO activity in the Darband District of the Karategeen Valley in eastern Tajikistan as a result of ongoing conflict and a resurgence of conservative religious leaders. Due to the recent departure from the area of a very conservative religious leader, the relatively new Dushanbe-based NGO *Parvin* held a forum for a large group of local women. The meeting hall was overcrowded with women eager to hear of ways and means to help themselves establish NGOs and to receive training. *Parvin* helped the group successfully select 50 young people for to receive training in the Dushanbe City Trade School. As a result of their Counterpart training and their successes in assisting people in the Darband area, this NGO is planning to discuss and implement a systematic effort to follow-up and further assist women in Darband and other nearby areas in the Karategeen Valley. Q 3/99

### **Local NGO Mediates Conflict between Armed Groups in Gorno Badakhshan**

A clash between two armed splinter groups in Khorog, the capital of Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), resulted in five casualties and a high level of tension between the groups and in the Khurog community. In the aftermath, the local NGO *Volunteers* contacted leaders of both groups and offered their services as a mediator of the dispute. In collaboration with local high-level government officials and local leaders, the NGO convened negotiations that lasted several days. As a result, they managed to help the groups reconcile their differences and to stabilize the situation in this town of 25,000 inhabitants. The NGO *Volunteer* played the major role in this process and was able to succeed, due to its image, popularity among the population and its capable members, nearly all of whom have received training and technical assistance from Counterpart's NGO Support Center in Khorog. Q 3/99

### **Women's NGOs are Opening Up the Pamir Mountains**

Counterpart grantee NGO *Modar* bravely and successfully organized and conducted several roundtables with groups of women in Garm, Darband and Djirgital districts on this subject involving a total of nearly 100 women. *Modar* ensured open dialogue by meeting with a high level UTO military leader to explain the need for and focus of the meetings. Related activities were conducted in the Karategeen Valley by the women's NGOs *Shafqat*, *Ehyo* and *Oshtii*. They successfully conduct 3 workshops on "Human Rights for Women," "Family Protection" and "Women and Elections." The facilitators were recommended by Counterpart as active leaders of women's NGOs and the trainings were planned and supported by the OSCE. It should be noted that most international organizations had discontinued their program activities in this area, due to serious security problems. Transportation was found and arranged by the NGOs themselves without any guarantee of their security. It was a very brave decision to conduct the workshops. For the first time, women of the Karategeen Valley are beginning to learn about their rights under the laws of Tajikistan and relevant international covenants. These NGOs have received extensive training and technical assistance from Counterpart's NGO Support Initiative. Additional follow-up activities are planned and will be carried out in the Karategeen Valley and adjacent areas of the Pamirs by local NGOs with the assistance of Counterpart Consortium. Q 2/99

### **Contract NGO Gets Kudos from Peers and Donor**

At this point in the NGO Support Initiative (Phase II) Counterpart has successfully developed the capacity of targeted NGOs to perform as contractors to perform needs assessments, perform problem analysis and plan, schedule and implement training and a variety of other services for international organizations and for other local NGOs. Good results were noted from the first experience in late 1998 and have continued to the present: The NGO *Manijha* was referred to assist with the training needs of UNDP's 22 Community Development Centers (CDCs) in the Khatlon Oblast and neighboring districts. The project began in February and was completed in May 1999. The local NGO did a series of needs-assessments of the CDCs, and, based on those, developed a training plan. The overall purpose was to train the CDCs to become independent and self-sustaining NGOs, through the series of trainings. The effectiveness of the training was evaluated and determined to have produced very positive results. Moreover, there were numerous requests from the CDCs for training on advanced topics. UNDP and the beneficiaries all believe local training to be very effective for developing the capacity of NGOs and CBOs and that local NGOs have amply demonstrated they can supply these services if they are adequately prepared. Q2/99

### **Future Leaders Exchange Alumni Help Tajik Orphans**

There are 90 children between the ages of 3 and 12 in the "Internat" orphanage in the Dushanbe suburb Leninski District. The orphans live in poor conditions and suffer from poor nutrition and lack of amenities of virtually every kind. The Alumni of the Freedom Support Act Future Leaders Exchange Program (FSA FLEX), a US-Tajikistan high school exchange program, with training and technical assistance from Counterpart Consortium, has created a local NGO to assist vulnerable groups such as this in the Dushanbe area. The relationship between the members of the newly-formed NGO and the orphanage began in November of 1998, when they hosted a Halloween and Thanksgiving (American holidays the former exchange students learned to love during their experiences in the US) party for the children. Then in June 1999 the NGO members gathered food, clothes and children's books locally and distributed them to the children at the orphanage, where they spent the day playing games together. Q2/99

### **"40 Springs" Water Association Forms**

Utility services to people living in outlying areas adjacent to Dushanbe have been severely curtailed and many families have been without safe and potable domestic water for several years. In 1998, a group of community leaders, local government officials and makhalla leaders formed the NGO *Chel Cheshma* (40 Springs), the first domestic water users association in Tajikistan. The group has a Board of 28 people who were the founders and currently is serving some 4,400 family residences. The effort to improve domestic water availability in that area was initially begun in several separate and independent pieces, of which three were built as micro-projects of the Tajikistan Social Investment Fund (TASIF) and other pieces were formerly parts of kolkhozes (collective farms or processing plants) that are now reduced in size or broken into pieces and partially privatized. The integration of the separate projects into one association was accomplished as the result of an interactive community-based workshop carried out in Leninsky District by a local NGO under a grant from Counterpart Consortium.

Counterpart grantee NGO *Man and Nature* conducted an initial workshop on Problem Identification & Problem Solving (**Problem ID**) for community and local government leaders in the area. Following the workshop, a group of the participants were instrumental in putting together first an interest group to explore their common interests in working together on the water issues and then the water association. During this process Counterpart provided additional workshops: **NGO & Community, Project Design** and **NGO Management** to help them to organize and register themselves as an NGO. *40 Springs* has also expressed interest in further assistance from Counterpart on issues related to user/member participation, more democratic governance, financial management and sustainability for the new association. Q 2/99

### **Local Tajikistan NGO Achieves Sustainability and Growth**

NGO *Adabsaro*, a former Counterpart grantee, has found support to continue its program through the "Cultural and Educational Center for Girls," in a poor Dushanbe *makhalla*. The Center provides subsidized free schooling for girls from poverty level families in the *Makhalla*, through the support of local donors (individuals and groups). Counterpart Consortium provided trainings and technical assistance and helped this local NGO mount an effective fundraising campaign in the more affluent areas of Dushanbe as well as undertake small entrepreneurship efforts involving the students, alumni and parent families. *Adabsaro*'s program focuses on basic literacy in standard curriculum subjects, handicrafts, and skills needed for future employment. The NGO members and volunteers actively work with children and make extra effort to involve parents as well. The NGO started its small entrepreneurship with raising chickens and selling eggs and live chickens, training the students in the process. This is a good example of a local NGO managing to find creative ways to sustain itself using local resources. They also have submitted a proposal to Soros Foundation to expand their activities to serve more children. Q 2/99

### **NGO Provides Information to Women in Tajikistan**

NGOs *Khuboni Porsigu* and *Women and Family Governmental Committee*, under a grant from Counterpart, initiated a seminar on the topic "Woman and Her Consciousness" in the Soviet District of Khatlon Oblast, where there are nearly 25,000 women. 200 women representatives from government, including the Chief of the local district's Executive Committee, and CBOs participated in this meeting. *Khuboni Porsigu* distributed 200 women's magazines to participants and the seminar participants recognized this magazine as the first major information source produced and distributed in over 10 years the addressed issues facing women. Participants were very active in discussions on various subjects, including women's property rights and laws affecting women. Participants indicated their frustration with the inability to obtain land, as many lack a male head of household. The NGO's legal expert explained that under the law of Tajikistan women could own land. The Chief of the Executive Committee promised to help them to correct this kind of offense against women and the law. He also invited women to come to him directly and inform him about these sorts of problems. Q 2/99

### **NGO in Tajikistan Engages Militia in Peace Building for the First Time**

In collaboration with Counterpart and UNHCR, NGO *Jahon* adapted the interactive workshop "Making Democracy Work" for the needs of law enforcement officials and conducted the first of a planned series of training workshops for 20 participants from the police force (militia) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Khatlon Oblast. The project was implemented at the request of the Department of Rule of Law, Defense and Security of the Majles-i-Oli (Parliament) and also supported by in-kind contributions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Participants stated they appreciated receiving the information on laws and conventions on human rights, enjoyed the interactive nature of the sessions and participated very actively and stated their intent to share the information with their colleagues. This is the first time that the militia has been engaged in the peace process by NGOs in Tajikistan. Q 1/99

### **NGO Coalition Responds to Emergency Needs of Most Vulnerable Groups**

Following an outbreak of violence in Khojand in November that destroyed property and displaced families, Counterpart NGO Support Center Manager Dilorom Atabaeva helped organize a working group representing 20 local NGOs to identify needs and resources. The coalition appointed committees responsible for fundraising, humanitarian assistance donations and monitoring. Within less than two months, the coalition had helped 105 children at the rehabilitation center *Ravshan* and 35 elderly people in their downtown community in Khujand. In addition to the relief support, the NGO group also organized a celebration to demonstrate community support for those most affected by the crisis. A coalition spokesperson said, "Our joint action could not solve all the problems, but we could provide them with some support, make them feel happy for a short time and feel part of this great community effort." Q 1/99

### **NGOs Help Women Find Their Political Voice in Tajikistan**

NGO *Women Voters* conducted a workshop for women in the Oktyabr District of Dushanbe, including teachers and community leaders. For many participants, this was their first chance to understand the electoral process and the importance of their role in the political life of the society. One participant at the end of the workshop stated that she didn't like to discuss important issues before, but now understood and appreciated the important role of women and the necessity that they participate in the political life of the society. Q 1/99

### **Newly Formed NGO Coalition Targets Improved Collaboration with State Structures**

A new NGO coalition - *Coordination Council of Children and Youth Organizations* -- has been created recently by local NGOs focused on issues of Youth & Children in Tajikistan. The group of NGOs has united to improve their ability to collaborate with the National Committee on Children and Youth. The *Council* includes 20 NGOs, nearly all of who have received training and technical assistance and grant support from Counterpart Consortium. The State Committee on Children and Youth expressed its readiness to cooperate with the *Council* and assist it by providing facilities for its meetings and other events and offered three high-level decision-making positions to leaders of NGOs represented in the *Council*. Q 1/99

### **State Governor Promotes Social Partnerships and NGO Role in Civil Society**

In a recent meeting of community leaders and international assistance organizations in Leninabad Oblast in Northern Tajikistan, the Oblast Governor recognized the valuable contributions of NGOs to the development of the region. He focused specifically on the importance of participation by NGOs and women in entrepreneurship activities in order for business to flourish and cited the participation of several NGOs in this process as critically important to the development of market infrastructure, promotion and marketing. He thanked Counterpart Consortium's NGO Support Center staff in Khojand for their assistance in building the capacity of local NGOs and in fostering the development of social partnerships. Q 1/99

### **NGO Trains Ministry of Education Officials in Children's Rights Curriculum**

NGO *Society and Child's Rights* conducted a national level training workshop on Children's Rights for officials in the Departments of the Ministry of Education that deal with education policy and practices in Tajikistan. Sixty education officials from all regions of the country took part in this interactive workshop. At the end of the workshop officials were given copies of the student booklet "Learn Your Rights," in Tajik and Russian, and a manual for teachers on teaching children their rights. The manual addresses how to communicate and discuss their concepts and issues interactively with children and includes techniques such as plays and games. After the workshop *Society and Child's Rights* members received letters from the heads of Education Departments, expressing how useful the manual is in teaching the children their rights. The NGO has received technical assistance, training and support from Counterpart Consortium. Q 1/99

### **Women's NGOs Meet with Political Party Leaders**

NGO *Orzu* organized a roundtable for representatives of women's NGOs, six political parties and the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR) with grant funding from Counterpart. The roundtable was held at the suggestion of the President of Tajikistan to develop a platform for subsequent discussion in a meeting he has agreed to later this year. The NGOs requested this meeting as a result of participation in "Making Democracy Work" training workshops conducted in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Colorado, also funded by Counterpart. A Working Group of NGOs and parties will continue to meet to develop strategies to remove obstacles to women's participation in politics. The initial meeting helped to establish a dialogue between women's NGOs and political parties and was a significant step in helping to put women's issues on the national political agenda. Q 1/99

### **NGOs Lead Efforts to Increase Women's Involvement in the Election Process**

The local NGO *National Association of Political Scientists* invited the chiefs of the 9 now-legal political parties and women's NGOs to a roundtable on "Parties and Movements in Tajikistan." The NGOs presented and discussed issues critical to women, such as their role in society and politics. The most important topics were women's participation in the up-coming elections and cooperation between political parties and women NGOs. As a result of this meeting several women's NGOs: decided to develop an election action plan to include activities that will help women NGOs educate and lobby political parties on the women's quota and other critical issues. Q 1/99

### **NGO Innovation in Curriculum Reform Attracts University Students Interns in Tajikistan**

NGO *Adabsaro* has received training and technical assistance from Counterpart Consortium to improve its capacity and to help them successfully implement the project "Cultural and Educational Center for Girls" in one of Dushanbe's poorest makhallas. The NGO works with girls who cannot attend school in their area because schools have remained closed due to security problems. *Adabsaro* teaches girls aged 10-15 years using innovative methods that combine new interactive techniques and traditional pedagogy in basic literacy, history and cultural heritage and useful handicrafts. This program has proven so successful that two Child Psychology students from Tajikistan National University have chosen *Adabsaro* for their internship and practicum. They selected this NGO's upper primary school for girls from sub-poverty level families over government public schools because it has good experience working with children and actively involves parents in the educational process. Q 1/99

### **Local NGOs Deliver Services on Contract to UNDP**

Two local NGOs, the Center of Informative and Educational Initiatives and Consumers' Rights Protection Center have provided assessment of Community Development Centers (CDCs) needs in Khatlon Oblast under contract with the UNDP Peace and Confidence Project. 4 NGO members, who are also Counterpart Contract Trainers, conducted a needs assessment and prepared a report covering 20 districts in Khatlon Oblast. In conducting the Needs Assessments the Contractors used knowledge gained from attending and conducting numerous training events for Counterpart Consortium. As a result, UNDP is developing plans to strengthen the capacity of the CDCs based on the NGO report. Q 4/98

### **NGOs Broaden Citizen Participation in Election Process**

NGO *Orzu* invited the now-legal political parties in Tajikistan to attend a series of forums where women community leaders will present and discuss critical issues affecting women and children in Tajikistan. *Orzu*, a Counterpart target NGO and grantee, participated in a training workshop focusing on the League of Women Voters model for citizen involvement in the election process. The League of Women Voters came to Central Asia through a Counterpart Partnership grant to a local NGO. As a result of that training, they initiated this dialogue with political parties and hope to engage them in future activities to further increase citizen involvement – especially women – in the political process in Tajikistan. Q 4/98

### **NGO Leads Multi-Lateral Grassroots Support for Street Children and Their Families**

The number of street children in Dushanbe has increased dramatically since the outbreak of civil war in 1992. Since 1996, the NGO Refugee Children and Vulnerable Citizens (RCVC) operates The Children's Center, that attracts and assists the children and their families through a program of health services, improved nutrition and hygiene, remedial education and vocational training. RCVC, a Counterpart grantee and active participant in other Counterpart Consortium support services, is setting a standard for effective partnerships among government, NGOs and international assistance organizations. Their programs receive support from the World Food Program, UNICEF, UNDP, Pharmacies Sans Frontieres, Relief International, the local Government of Leninsky District and the Ministries of Health and Labor. RCVC sees the Center as a clearinghouse to allow groups of concerned citizens to address at least some of the problems afflicting impoverished and indigent children and their families. Q 4/98



### **NGO Leader Asked to Participate in Official Peace and Reconciliation Process**

Dilbahar Khalilova, Director of the NGO *Fidokor*, has been invited to contribute to the work of the Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR), the primary forum for negotiation and implementation of peace and reconciliation between the Government and United Tajik Opposition (UTO). She will work together with them to develop projects for soldiers who are to be demobilized and returned to their communities. *Fidokor*, a Counterpart grantee, contract training provider and active participant, was selected based on its track record of providing services and solid reputation as a transparent and well-respected community stakeholder. Q 4/98

### **NGO Proposal Writing Skill Garners International Award and Leveraged Funding**

The leader of the Tajik NGO *Fidokor*, Dilbar Khaliliva, was awarded top honors and a \$5,000 grant at the Conference "Humanitarian Assistance for Refugees," on December 16, 1998 in Istanbul, to which she was invited at the recommendation of Counterpart. 31 representatives from NIS NGOs and several international organizations with projects related to conflict resolution and peace building process were in attendance. As an additional result of the improved skill of this NGO, two similar groups in Azerbaijan and Georgia have expressed interest in formalizing collaborative efforts in the future. *Fidokor* is a Counterpart target NGO, grantee and active participant in a range of support services offered by Counterpart Consortium. Q 4/98

### **Khojand NGOs Lead Post-Conflict Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building Efforts**

In the wake of recent civil unrest in the formerly peaceful Northern region of Khojand in November, Counterpart facilitated a roundtable for local NGOs to develop an action plan in response. The initiative group, which calls itself the NGO Club, has issued a challenge to all NGOs and businesses for charitable action. They have involved those most affected by recent events in the planning process and have organized fundraising drives to muster resources for their activities. They have collected donations and have organized a celebration for more than 130 children and their families. This initial response demonstrates the power of NGO coalitions and serves as a challenge to other community stakeholders. The efforts have garnered favorable publicity and the NGO club will continue their lead role in post-conflict efforts. Q 4/98

### **Women's NGOs and Women Members of Parliament Meet for the First Time**

NGO *Modar* participated in a workshop presented by the Colorado League of Women Voters, made possible by a Counterpart Consortium Partnership Grant and support by the AED/Global Traininfor Development Project. Using their new skill in facilitating citizen involvement in the political process, *Modar* held a special forum that brought together women's NGOs and all five female members of parliament for the first time. The forum revealed serious interest and surprise on the part of the women Members regarding the range of issues and activities and the numbers of active women's NGOs in the country. They mentioned that previously only three or four women's NGOs had come forth to establish communication with individual Members of Parliament and that they lacked information about the scope and breadth of the good work being done by women's NGOs in Tajikistan. Also discussed were specific items of legislation being considered by the Parliament, including issues of elections, education, taxation and rights of women and children. As a result of this forum, the parliamentarians have requested written recommendations for strengthening legislation and including women's voices and plan to present them in an upcoming session of parliament. Q 4/98

### **NGO Leads Disaster Preparedness Efforts with Local Government Support**

The Tajikistan NGO *Man and Nature* reached out to local and National Government officials and local communities in Leninsky District to bring them together to discuss the problems relating to displacement of people due to natural and man-made disasters. In identifying the need to develop a strategic plan to respond to disasters before they occur, the NGO is leading community efforts to collaborate on a regular basis. As a result of the initial three-day workshop, a group of community stakeholders has formed an initiate group to continue developing a disaster prepared ness strategy for nearly 200,000 inhabitants. Q 4/98

### **Teachers NGO Leads Collaboration in Conflict Education**

Many communities in Tajikistan have not been able to complete peaceful reconciliation following civil conflict and population displacements. With a broad package of support services from Counterpart Consortium, a group of highly motivated teachers has formed an NGO to take the lead in conflict transformation and tolerance education in severely impacted areas of southern Tajikistan. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education training, more than 50 middle-school teachers have already received re-training. Teachers and the Ministry are eager to develop creative ways to revitalize teachers' roles as catalysts for community development. The methodology used in this program has been adapted from a Counterpart program in Kyrgyzstan. Q3/98

### **Revised NGO Law Enacted by Parliament**

In June 1998, the first new NGO legislation in Central Asia was approved by Parliament and signed into law by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. ICNL and Counterpart played key facilitating roles in catalyzing the process that led to this achievement. In early spring, Consortium members sponsored a Workshop focused on NGO legislation, the need for reform and specific items to be addressed. The workshop was preceded by careful groundwork to ensure full participation by both NGOs and government officials and resulted in the formation of a working group to draft legislation. The majority of the NGO members of this working group are Counterpart trainees and grantees. This example of independent NGOs and Government working together collaboratively is completely unprecedented in Tajikistan. Q2/98

### **IDPs and Returnees Receive Training in Conflict Reconciliation**

The NGO Fidokor grant to work with returning refugees and communities through conflict reduction and reconciliation training in Kabodian rayon has resulted in dramatically expanded media coverage. This NGO is a good example of a strong NGO able to find resources and earn respect of the local communities, Government and international organizations. The leader, Dilbahar Khalilova is a Counterpart Consortium contract trainer and former employee of the Migration Department of the Ministry of Labor. Q1/98

### **Press Coverage of NGO Programs Increases Access to War Relief Services**

Local press covered the activities of a current NGO grantee **Charity Foundation of Medical Assistance**, featuring their project "Assistance on Wheels." The project - in a severely affected district of Dushanbe - provides free medical care to indigent senior citizens abandoned or stranded by the effects of the civil conflict. Q1/98

### **Fledgling NGO Coalition Committed to Establishing Democratic Operating Framework**

The NGO Center Network, a large group of NGOs, has met monthly in Dushanbe since September, encouraged by CC/Tajikistan. The members have created a sector-specific working group (Action Committee) of representatives elected by the member organizations. The first task of the Action Group is to develop the charter: define the mission, goal(s) and priorities of the new organization. Previous efforts of the full membership to define the charter had run into problems due to the large number of NGOs involved. Using the elected representative model seems to be a major step for this fledgling NGO association. Q1/98

### **Mobilizing Volunteers as a Constituency Building Strategy**

NGO *Adamiyat*, a past grantee and recipient of Counterpart training, conducted a four-day workshop for its constituents (veterans of World War II) to develop interest in self-help and to promote voluntarism and active involvement among this group. Counterpart staff members met with *Adamiyat* leaders on several occasions prior to this workshop, discussing issues of sustainability, including financial management, security, use of volunteers and membership and constituency building. Q4/97

### **Returned NET/GTD Participants Lead NGO Innovations**

The following examples highlight the impact of providing NGO leaders with the opportunity to see first hand the innovations and leadership initiatives of NGOs in other countries. Organized by Counterpart in 1996 and 1997, NGO Leadership Development Delegations were funded by the Academy for Educational Development through USAID. All three of these delegates are also participants in a wide range of Counterpart services. These examples all involve implementation of new programs and approaches learned in the US.

- Yuri Skatchilov of the Youth Eco Center was awarded a NED grant to do democracy training through his environmental program here. He is working closely with the media and the Ministry of Education to implement the program.
- Ibod Sharifi of CCCID has produced a series of television programs on the rights of children and the problems of child rearing in the present atmosphere. The programs were aired free of cost as public service by State TV.
- RCVC Executive Director Mavjuda Rahmanova held a birthday party for Afghan Refugee children that filled a local private theater. Before food and films, there were gifts and poems and warm words from many officials of the Government of Tajikistan. This was particularly welcome since the local officials are not usually very friendly to Afghan refugees here. It gave courage to other refugees who are now forming their own self-help organization. Q4/97

### **National NGO Network Fosters Collaboration and Democracy Skills**

The NGO Center Network, a fledgling NGO association has met monthly since September in facilities provided by Counterpart Consortium. At the December meeting, several NGO representatives suggested that a working group be created to begin work on registration for the NGO Center as a national NGO coalition. Attendees discussed election of a board of directors and a drafting committee to define the mission, goal(s) and priorities of the new organization. All participants contributed to a lively and polemic discussion about a wide range of topics. Although no concrete decisions have yet been made, the meeting was a clear demonstration of growing NGO skill in democratic principles. Q4/97

### **NGOs Broaden Base of Financial Support**

Two NGOs recently leveraged skills learned through participation in Counterpart training and grant programs by submitting successful proposals to the US Embassy Democracy Fund. Both have sent several staff members to Proposal Development training and both are former Counterpart grantees. Fidokor opened an information center on social and legal issues for refugees. Shark held a seminar on what is needed in order to ensure free and fair elections in Tajikistan. Q3/97

### **Renewed Momentum in NGO Law**

As a result of the ICNL visit, there has been a renewed interest in NGO law. The local government decided the main issue was "control" but the NGOs, which are very strong, have their own ideas and are openly discussing the issue of taxation of grants and separation of political and religious elements from the legal structures for NGOs. Q3/97

## TURKMENISTAN

### **Information Center Set-up Enhances NGO's Responsiveness to Beneficiaries**

Three months ago, the NGO Trieria recently received a grant to open a Health Information Center in Dashoguz city in response to the new system of family medicine resulting from national health care reforms. The reforms are positive, but the population remained about their rights to health care under the new system. As a result of a public education campaign to address the problem, NGO membership has increased by 12 people, four volunteers are now actively involved, four doctors are providing pro-bono consultations and visits to the Center have increased by 20%. In addition, Trieria has entered into a partnership with the new health clinic to assist in the registration of patients qualifying for assistance. Thirty-two patients have been registered through Trieria's efforts and have received needed treatment that was previously unavailable to them. Q 1/00

### **NGOs Team-Up to Assist Unemployed Women**

Traditionally, the Women's Union of Turkmenistan has been the only NGO recognized by the government working on women's issues, which has stymied collaboration and participation of other NGOs in gender issues. For the past 10 months, in the framework of a Counterpart grant, the Center for Economic Education and Young Entrepreneurs has forged direct linkages with the Women's Union in its employment training program. This relationship has enabled the two NGOs to combine professional business skills with government relations in an effective employment placement scheme. Since February of 1999, over 240 women have been trained and 50 have been placed in jobs as a direct result of this NGO project. Q 1/00

### **Arma "Arms" Pensioners with Skills to Lobby for Fair Pension Payment**

A new Turkmen law on pensions was published on January 1, 2000. The following month, over 50 pensioners called or visited the office of *Arma* to request assistance in calculating their new pensions and subsidy rates in order to verify that their new payments were accurate. In response, *Arma* organized a roundtable with experts from the Ministry of Social Welfare in which 32 pensioners participated. Using the information gathered during the event, *Arma* was able to consult with over 50 pensioners and teach them how to review their January and February pensions to verify the accuracy of the amount. As a result of *Arma's* intervention, 42 pensioners discovered mistakes in their pension payments and were reimbursed by the Ministry of Social Welfare for the adjusted balances to correct the underpayment totaling an adjustment of over 4 million manat (approximately \$900). Q 1/00

### **Community Conflict Resolution in Action**

In the past, communities receiving water from a modern purification plant would passively wait for the water to be delivered. If there were problems at the village level with distribution of the water, communities would become divided and grudges would be formed. Recently, under the water users' association project, that situation has changed. In three instances this quarter the Water User's Association of Turkmenbashi etrap has been asked to intervene and arbitrate conflicts regarding the use and distribution of the water. In one situation, three members of a serdop group (12 families) felt that the water delivered to their village was not sufficient for all of the group members. They decided to expel one family, a woman-headed household with four children. The woman contacted the WUA and asked for assistance. Using the facilitation skills learned through training methodology and conducting community meetings, the three WUA members were able to turn the situation around. The silent majority of the group members did not want to expel the family and slowly came its defense, thus diminishing the control the dominating three members had wielded in the community. The solution suggested by a local elder and adopted by the community was to let the woman be in charge of the distribution to demonstrate her commitment. Her status in the village has been raised as a result and the community is no longer divided over the issue. Q 1/00

### **Discovering Civil Society Together**

There are few NGOs focused on civic education in Turkmenistan. Counterpart grantee Civic Dignity is the only NGO conducting training focusing on civic education. In order to reach a broader constituency, the NGO launched a public outreach campaign through a series of training seminars that have trained 280 people, including youth, teachers, NGO leaders and other community activists. The theme of civic education had a catalyzing effect on audiences. Results include:

- 7 new initiative groups have been formed by participants of these training sessions in three regions of Turkmenistan. These groups carry-out meetings with students in their cities; discuss citizens' rights using handouts from the training; and have distributed newsletters and informational materials from the seminars to over 200 people
- Four teachers from one secondary school have added civic education topics to their class curriculum, thus reaching 400 students in Ashgabad alone.
- One teacher from Lebap region took the initiative to translate and conduct in Turkmen the module entitled: "Issues of Abortion" Q 1/00

### *Mutual Understanding through Ecology*

There are more NGOs working in the ecology sector than any other in Turkmenistan, yet their relations with government structures have traditionally consisted of one-time joint activities with no follow-up or perspective. Recently, the *Green Team* that receives free office space in the Turkmen State University realized the impact of their efforts of six months of labor when they hosted the first National Ecological Conference in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The event gathered over 150 teachers and representatives of nine Eco NGOs from across the country and incorporated interactive methods such as working groups to draft recommendations on how to re-insert ecological courses into the national educational program. This dialogue between government, NGOs and teachers was continued through nine articles published in the national newspaper regarding the importance of adding ecology to the school curriculum. Q 1/00

### *NGO as Link to Outside World*

In Turkmenabad City, 600 kilometers outside of Ashgabad, there is no place for people to access e-mail except for the Dostluk Center, which began receiving e-mail free of charge through Counterpart. In the past 8 months, 5 free seminars have been conducted on how to use e-mail for 45 participants. In addition, over 90 people over the course of the grant used e-mail at no charge through the Center. As a result of this international information access, the NGO has assisted the following activities:

- 15 students have applied to study abroad through e-mail
- Free books were sent to the Center by an American NGO
- 3 people with physical disabilities were put in contact with international clinics regarding treatment
- Volunteers at the Center have assisted 49 e-mail users by translating information from English to Russian and Turkmen for free Q 1/00

### **Civil Society Concepts Reach Turkmen Speaking Audience**

Achyk Gapy, the first Turkmen speaking NGO to target the Turkmen speaking population, has provided a unique "pre-training" module on basic civil society concepts to over 100 people in villages in Ahal region. This "Pre-training" was designed by the NGO members and adapted to the local needs of the ethnic Turkmen population who have never been exposed to participatory approaches. The NGO's members developed all materials in the Turkmen language. As a result of the efforts of Achyk Gapy to reach the Turkmen speaking population:

- 2 new Turkmen speaking initiative groups were able to organize themselves around issues and have formalized their structures as NGOs.

- 80 Turkmen speaking participants who were formerly isolated from standard civil society training activities due to language, cultural and geographic barriers have completed NGO and Community training and become integrated into the NGO community network.
- a group of 25 volunteers was formed and is now transferring the information learned in the workshops to other members of their villages.
- The inhabitants of the settlements have formed 8 initiative groups for local needs, such as the decision of women's questions, health and hygiene, ecology and support of the farmers. The most active of these fledgling groups was recently the recipient of a small grant under a competitive Counterpart Consortium start-up connectivity grant program. Q 1/00

### **NGO Helps to Improve the Quality of Health Services**

The relationship between patients and doctors is sometimes clouded by conflict and misunderstanding. In Turkmenistan, there is no governmental agency in place that specifically represents the interests of patients in situations in which their rights are violated through denial of services, inadequate or mishandled treatment, incorrect diagnosis and/or irresponsible care. Over a three-month period the grantee *Arkadag* has received 111 requests for assistance from patients regarding dissatisfaction with treatment. In twenty-five cases, when *Arkadag* was unable to resolve the issue as a direct intermediary between the patients and a facility, the NGO submitted formal complaints to the medical authorities. In all twenty-five cases, the medical administration reviewed the complaints and pursued corrective measures to the satisfaction of the patients. Q 4/99

### **Increased Media Coverage of NGOs in Regions**

The absence of independent media means that there is scarce opportunity to publicize civil society activities in Turkmenistan. Since February of 1999, the Association of Journalists for Social Partnership has been actively promoting social partnership activities through their newsletter and outreach activities. In June, a seminar on social partnerships was conducted for 23 participants from all three sectors and the mass media representing the five regions of Turkmenistan. As a result of this event, the number of articles about NGO activities in the regions increased from an average of 4 per month in previous months to 18! In addition, the association welcomed 5 new members from the regions. From May through December of 1999, 760 copies of the Association's newsletter have been distributed, including articles written by other NGOs about their social partnership activities. Q 4/99

### ***US-Turkmen Family Practice Association Collaboration***

For the past two years, the Turkmen Association of Family Practitioners and the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Family Practice have strategized on how to transfer professional skills across national and cultural boundaries. In October of 1999, through a Counterpart Partnership grant, two American doctors conducted a five-day seminar together with the Turkmen Association. Fifty doctors from all five regions of Turkmenistan participated in the event which was also attended by members of the Ministry of Health who were initially suspicious of the activities of the Turkmen NGO and restricted its access to local physicians. As a result of the seminar, which was broadly covered by local press:

- The Ministry of Health has agreed to permit Ashgabad Hospital Chiefs and their subordinates to participate in the association's activities
- The Association was given permission to carry out training in regional family practice centers
- The Ministry of Health has requested to participate in the upcoming study tour to visit the US Academy of Family Practice in an effort to understand how association and government agencies can work together in the health sector Q 4/99

### **The Local Press Acknowledges the Third Sector**

The absence of independent media outlets in Turkmenistan has hindered information-sharing opportunities for local interest groups. Following four roundtables in Dashoguz city organized by the Dashoguz Support Center and involving local NGOs, the local paper, *Dashoguz Habarlary*, published a detailed interview with the Support Center Manager. In the week following the publication of the interview, the paper received four letters and more than ten telephone calls from readers interested in learning more about civil society activities. In addition, the number of visitors to the Support Center more than doubled from the previous month from 8 people to 18. The article served as the catalyst to add an additional "NGO and Community" training to the Dashoguz roster that month. Following the training, one more article was written in the local paper describing the importance of the Third Sector. Q 4/99

### **Turkmen Handicrafts Have International Appeal**

Most Turkmen artisans are women who lack access to opportunities for dialogue with other artisans and potential foreign partners and buyers. The Artisan NGO *Miras* has creatively carried out a series of activities to make the world market a less foreign and intimidating concept for local artisans. Over the past two years, *Miras* has participated in three international craft fairs and four special seminars in which Turkmen NGOs were represented for the first time. On the ground the NGO is also undertaking a project that teaches local artisans new methods of quality control for the production of traditional crafts. Through professional contacts and newly acquired skills, the NGO has been able to increase its profits by 60%. The proven ability to sell the products has piqued the interest of local artisans, resulting in an increase of 10 new members over the past three months. *Miras'* marketing flair is also evidenced in its full color homepage catalogue of Turkmen crafts available on CANGONet. Q 4/99

### **Training Leads to Greater Facilities**

The Turkmen NGO, Junior Achievement, has launched such a successful business training program for youth and unemployed women that it recently found itself unable to respond to the demand for training due to lack of space and an insufficient number of computers. To solve this problem, Counterpart responded to a request by the group to insert an extra Fundraising module into the training schedule. Following the training, the NGO members launched a fundraising campaign that resulted in over \$7,240 in donated equipment including six computers, furniture, an air conditioner and other necessary accessories. The Turkmen Politechnic institute also has pledged the continued free use of an additional 20 square meter room and one-million manat (\$80) to repair the room. As a result, the technical capacity of the NGO has been amplified as they now possess twelve computers and are able to extend educational opportunities to three times the number of students than they could before this unprecedented fundraising feat! Q 4/99

### **Through Civic Education to a Civil Society**

In Turkmenistan there is no implementation of civic education at the state level. In the framework of a Counterpart grant, the NGO Civil Dignity conducts a range of seminars and training sessions on civic education in Ashgabad. By advertising during Counterpart training, the NGO has attracted many participants from the regions to their training as well. After only four months of activities, and as the result of two training of trainers, 35 participants, including 9 teachers from Turkmenabad, have completed training on civic education. As a result, they are qualified to train on civic education with Civil Dignity, and they are encouraged to incorporate civic education in their regular school subjects. The teachers in Turkmenabad were so excited by the work of Civil Dignity that they have formed their own branch of the NGO to expand knowledge of civic education among students and teachers in this capital city if the second largest region of Turkmenistan. Both the number of trainers of civic education and the quantity of members of the NGO has increased by 9. Q 4/99

### **From Training to Practice**

Most Turkmen NGOs are newly formed organizations and find it difficult to attract volunteers to their activities. The new "Constituency Building" training which was conducted at Counterpart's office in August helped many NGOs understand the advantages and principles of working with volunteers and forming an "interested environment." Using the knowledge received in training, two ecology NGOs, Cheshme and Young Geologists, were able to attract a total of 68 volunteers from high schools and universities to participate in joint activities. Twenty-nine volunteers in Firuza canyon took part in a trash collecting activity where 50 kilograms of garbage were gathered. These new volunteers installed educational "no littering" signs and distributed fact sheets about the dangers of irresponsible waste disposal. The activity involved the coordination of volunteers, the Turkmen Polytechnic Institute, Kopetdag Reserve and the Turkmen Gas Company, which sponsored the transportation, equipment and meals, as well as an expert advisor. Q 4/99

### **Rural Women Gain Economic Voice**

The hardships faced by Turkmen women during the transitional economic period have been felt the hardest in rural villages. One women's NGO grantee located in a settlement in a remote village of the Dashoguz region has, for the past nine months, carried out nine training activities on Small Business Development for 142 rural women. In the framework of its grant, the NGO adapted Counterpart's Small Business Development training for women at the village level. In addition to training, the NGO has also catalyzed the activities of women in this village through consultations on economic and legal questions and roundtables related to business. Seven women have organized small businesses, earning between 10 and 80 dollars per month. Twenty-two additional women have formed a collective. Four of the trainees are now members of the NGO and 12 have become volunteers. Q 4/99

### **NGO and State Structure Combine Resources to Increase Youth Environmental Activism**

The question of generating financial resources is the main challenge to Turkmen NGOs after the issue of registration. Counterpart grantee *Young Geologists* NGO has forged a partner *Turkmengeologia*, a State structure, to address the issue of financial sustainability. *Turkmengeologia* does not possess the human resources to conduct outreach activities to interest the public in issues of environmental protection. Conversely, *Young Geologists* has the human resources and equipment to conduct a public outreach campaign but no resources to finance outreach activities. *Turkmengeologia* has agreed to provide office and training space to the NGO free of charge at an annual value of over \$2,400. In addition, it sponsored two separate trips to the Caspian Sea and Chuli nature park for 21 schoolchildren at a cost of \$1,700. Q 3/99

### **Union of Disabled Secures Government Support for Member-Requested Program**

The disabled in Turkmenistan face even more severe barriers to employment than the general population, including issues of access and mobility in the workplace. In response to a large number of member requests, the Union of Disabled has been able to analyze data about all members seeking employment with a computer provided by Counterpart Consortium grant support. The analysis indicated that home-based work would fit the needs of a high percentage of members seeking employment. As a result, the Union of Disabled successfully sought assistance from the Ministry of Textile Industry, that now employs 30 members doing piecework on contract in their homes. Q 3/99

### **Artisan Association Helps Members Generate Income and Gains Official and Corporate Support**

In order to respond to broad interest in preserving and rejuvenating handicraft traditions, the Craftsman Support Center was established in Turkmenistan with support from Counterpart Consortium and the Center of Cultural Heritage and Education. The Center provides training, consultations, information and product development support to almost 150 artisans. Members have sold \$1,300 in handicrafts with assistance from the Center. A recent exhibition featuring crafts from 32 artisans from all regions of Turkmenistan was held in partnership with the State Tourist Corporation and the Ak Altyn Hotel. Q 3/99



### **NGO Mobilizes Consumer Awareness and Advocates with Government**

In Turkmenistan's transitional economy, product and service quality standards have declined sharply. Lack of access to information about existing consumer rights legislation has burdened consumers with additional risk and costs and prevents them from exercising their legal rights. Counterpart grantee *My Rights* is the only NGO in Turkmenistan that is addressing this critical need for advocacy and public education. Over the last three months the NGO has published a monthly newsletter, provided training for 250 people, conducted a series of public forums and operated a hotline to help consumers file complaints and better understand how to act on new information. As a result, 16 consumer complaints to the NGOs hotline were reviewed by staff lawyers who advocated on their behalf resulting in refunds totalling \$255. Q 3/99

### **Environmental NGOs Gain Credibility by Working Together**

Environmentally focused NGOs in Turkmenistan have been criticized and are self-critical regarding their tendency to work individually on projects rather than collaborating creatively to avoid redundancy and duplication of effort. A variety of eco-NGOs have cited Counterpart training sessions as neutral ground where they can meet and develop joint activities. Counterpart grantee Young Geologist and two more NGOs recently organized a clean-up of the Kopetdag Reserve accompanied by a public awareness campaign targeting visitors to the reserve, a popular summertime vacation destination. As a result:

- the local press covered the activity in two newspapers;
- the organizers were invited to a meeting with local government officials to design a joint strategy for the installation of more garbage cans in the park and in the city of Ashgabad;
- the NGOs were tasked by the city government with monitoring of the timely removal of garbage from trash cans and were provided with maps of public gardens and contact telephone numbers of responsible organizations to contact if waste is not properly removed; and
- one NGO was invited to an annual seminar of city teachers to speak about ecological education of students.

The three NGOs believe that they have finally received recognition by the local authorities as a result of banding together to convey a unified message and plan to continue their coalition development in the context of the upcoming NGO conference. Q 3/99

### **NGO Gains Government Recognition for Refugees and Their Own Valuable Contributions**

With a small grant from Counterpart, the NGO *Keik Ocara* provides services and advocates on behalf of more than 4,000 economic migrants and internally displaced people in Turkmenistan. After several attempts to collaborate with the Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, the NGO has successfully received recognition as a viable partner by the Ministry. From now on, the Ministry has agreed to provide letters waiving the medical fees for treatment in local medical clinics and hospitals to internally displaced people who have been referred by the *Keik Okara* center. During the last three months the NGO center provided services to over 197 patients, 65 of whom were directed to clinics where they received free medical check-ups and 5 of whom were admitted to the local hospital free of charge. Q 3/99

### **Raising Awareness, Corporate Support for Disability Rights in Turkmenistan**

The disabled community is marginalized in every way in Turkmenistan and would benefit from increased public recognition, self-esteem and opportunities for community interaction. Two NGOs, Special Olympics and Umyt, have joined efforts in a partnership project funded by Counterpart to create an activity center in Turkmenbashi city. One activity of the center is psycho-social rehabilitation through sports. In June, the NGO partners leveraged \$11,600 from three corporate sponsors to send five invalid athletes to the 1999 Special Olympics Games where they won six medals. The victories were publicized in two local newspapers increasing public awareness of the NGOs' activities and resulting in 18 new NGO members. Q 3/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Links City to the World Through E-mail and Internet**

Lack of information and local sources of news contribute to the isolation of small cities in Turkmenistan. In order to address this problem, the *Dostluk Language and Culture Center* of Turkmenabat, a Counterpart grantee, has opened an internet and e-mail training center and public access center that has already trained more than 200 people. As a result, students and teachers have established contacts in 11 countries. Relatives who moved to the US were reunited with a resident after many years. The community has received donations of textbooks and other educational materials and the Dostluk Center has strengthened ties to similar organizations in other countries. Q 3/99

### **NGO Coalition Distributes Humanitarian Assistance and Strengthens Member Skills**

A coalition of seven NGOs, many of whom are Counterpart grantees, have joined forces to receive and distribute humanitarian assistance vulnerable groups. Within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed with the Counterpart Humanitarian Assistance Program, the coalition has already distributed several tons of material aid valued at more than \$1,300,000 throughout Turkmenistan. This contract will be extended to include additional projects identified by the NGO coalition itself. Q 3/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Fills Real Need in Collaboration with other Community Stakeholders**

Turkmenistan is one of the countries with the highest level of seismic danger. The threat of strong catastrophic earthquakes remains a real factor of daily risk for Turkmen citizens. In response to the lack of public information related to seismic safety, Counterpart grantee Formatsia, has created the only Turkmen Informational Technical Training Center for Seismic Safety in the country. In collaboration with the Institute of Seismology, the State Commission on Emergency Situations and three other NGO partners, almost 500 children have been trained to help themselves and their families in the event of an earthquake.

- As a result of positive student responses to the training, School #41 has requested that training be offered to improve the knowledge of its own students
- The Head of The Emergency Commission within the Turkmen Cabinet of Ministers stated in a public forum that, "Formatsia is filling a vital need to prepare the population for earthquakes and we look forward to working with this NGO on a follow-up project on broader disaster relief"
- The Red Crescent Society is planning to develop a partnership project with this NGO to use these concepts in at least 5 other schools in the city. Q2/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Leads Reproductive Health Reform**

Over the past year, statistics gathered by Arkadag have revealed that 36% of pregnant women in Ashgabad suffer from toxemia and 38% are anemic, yet the medical facilities available to these women are often under-stocked and in poor condition. Under the objectives of a Counterpart support grant, Arkadag conducted surveys of 170 women between the ages of 21-40 which revealed that 1/3 of the women were unhappy with the treatment that they received during pregnancy and felt that the quality of medical services in maternity homes is unsatisfactory. Despite these complaints, the women had nowhere to turn to voice their dissatisfaction until Arkadag's newsletter gave them a forum. In addition, Arkadag attracted six partner NGOs to the cause by organizing a roundtable to educate women on "Issues of Women's Health and Legal Rights." As a result:

- Arkadag has been identified as a key partner in UNFPA's Gender and Development Program.
- For the first time in Turkmenistan, an NGO has initiated and hosted it's own roundtable in which health statistics based upon an independent survey among patients and conducted by an NGO were discussed and presented to an international panel influencing policy decisions.

This event generated linkages between international and local NGOs in the area of women's' rights from the perspective of the patient's voice, attracting 5 new volunteers (3 from other NGOs and 2 women who took part in the survey) to Arkadag's work. Q 2/99

### **NGO Leads Reestablishment of Ecological Education in Turkmenistan**

Ecological education has been removed from the national curriculum in Turkmenistan. As a result, children are growing up without an understanding of how their actions impact the environment, their health, and the safety of their communities. In response, the ecological club Yashil was formed in 1996 by a group of concerned mothers and teachers who began exploring ways to use games to expose elementary-aged school children to their environment. Since receiving a Counterpart grant in 1998, the NGO has conducted a broad range of successful activities, including:

- providing almost 1,400 lessons in Russian and Turkmen in 20 Ashgabad schools;
- helping students organize 4 tree planting activities;
- publishing monthly newsletters for all Ashgabad schools; and
- conducting 2 conferences and several Earth Day competitions and special events.

A number of partner NGOs have also been involved. Teachers, school officials and the local Department of Education officials are supportive and actively involved in the project. Two schools have offered free space to the NGO in attempts to increase the availability of their services in their schools. Q 2/99

### **Ad Hoc Environment NGO Coalition Strengthens Government Collaboration in Turkmenistan**

For many years in Turkmenistan there were no partnership connections between NGOs and government institutions, especially Ministries. As the result of a recent roundtable, a group of 12 eco-NGOs will coordinate their activities and work on the national government's ecology policy. This event marked the first time that a Ministry in Turkmenistan initiated and hosted an open discussion with members of NGOs to discuss policy. Results include:

- The Deputy Minister designated a contact person at the Ministry from whom all NGOs can receive updated information about eco-programs in Turkmenistan.
- The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection outlined its priority projects for the next year and encouraged NGO members to form working groups and provide input on national ecological workplans.
- Representatives from the Ministry met individually with each of the NGO representatives after the roundtable, asking for their opinions and priorities.
- The 12 NGOs began discussion to prepare formal registration materials as an ecological coalition, in the framework of a Counterpart project in partnership with the Ministry. Q 2/99

### **At Risk Kids in Turkmenistan Get a Second Chance Thanks to Successful Fundraising**

The NGO *Family, Charity, Health* doing work in a prison community in Buzmein City was inspired by Counterpart training to carry-out a summer fundraising campaign that would help them keep at risk youngsters off the streets and out of drugs. Drawing from the skills learned in training and consultation with Counterpart and with financial support from Counterpart, the leaders of the NGO worked with children at the Social Rehabilitation Center to develop a plan. The plan targeted potential sponsors and designed an interactive program for a summer camp that would integrate the at risk kids with other youngsters from more stable home environments. A team of nine volunteers worked diligently to publicize the event and solicit contributions. Results include:

- The city mayor's office sponsored 50 youngsters with passes to cover the cost of four weeks at a Buzmein camp sight
- Four commercial organizations collectively donated a total of 5,000,000 manat (approximately \$3125) to cover the cost of all food needed during the one month camp
- The student mentoring program element of the camp was praised publicly by the city mayor who is an active supporter of this NGO. Q 2/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Gains Government Recognition with Effective Service Delivery**

There is a need for better-trained social workers in Turkmenistan. To address this problem, the NGO Annageldy has provided free training to 35 nurse aides/social workers representing all regions of the country. Practical application of the training includes the provision of both medical and social services for the homebound -providing a voice to an often-silent minority of citizens. In the course of the 3 months of their Counterpart Consortium sponsored project, Annageldy has identified and forwarded the cases of 600 persons requiring medical and social assistance to the local Ministry of Social Welfare from which over 160 have already received assistance. Through the delivery of effective social services and a strong knowledge of its constituent base, Annageldy has improved collaboration and respect from local government representatives who recognize the value of the NGO's work. Q 2/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Secures Corporate Assistance with Support from Local Government**

The Umyt Center for Social rehabilitation recently opened its doors to physically challenged children and adults in Turkmenbashi City. Practicing new skills in fundraising and advocacy learned through participation in Counterpart training, the NGO developed a fundraising strategy to obtain furniture for the center. First, the support of the local Mayor's office was secured in the form of a jointly-hosted Social Partnership Roundtable to present the valuable project. As a result of the NGO's skill and the Mayor's endorsement of a donation campaign, \$600 in used furniture and medical supplies was donated by local businesses. Q 2/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Gains First Seat on Election Monitoring Committee**

After returning from the USAID-funded advocacy training in the Philippines in March, the leader of the Special Olympics of Turkmenbashi City began researching the laws governing inclusion of NGOs in the upcoming Parliamentary elections slated for December of 1999. She discovered that members of NGOs have the right to participate in election monitoring committees, a fact previously unknown to the NGO community. After several meetings with city officials, Special Olympics is the first grassroots NGO to be included on the election monitoring commission. Through participation in an NGO Forum, Special Olympics has shared their new knowledge and is encouraging other NGOs to exercise their rights and push for increased involvement in upcoming elections. Q 2/99

### **Counterpart Links Farming Community with Winrock Experts to Solve Water Problem**

Since 1991 the irrigation systems serving the farmers of Turkmenbashi etrap of Dashouz Velayet have slowly fallen into disrepair. This is especially true of the large pumps used for lifting water out of irrigation canals to flood adjacent fields. The spare parts for pumps are not available and the pumps often require costly repairs. In the village of Garaul Gala where the Water Users' Association has provided assistance to organize the community and build serdops (water cisterns) for storing drinking water, the drinking water committee expanded its focus to solving a local irrigation problem. In January, Counterpart responded to a request from the committee to introduce the Farmer to Farmer Program Representative of Winrock, International to the committee and community. Results include:

- Since then drawing on a community decision-making process, the water committee, local irrigation authorities and Winrock volunteers (irrigation specialists from New Mexico and Texas) built a water gate in the canal that serves the fields of Garaul Gala.
- The American design was adapted by a resident engineer to suit local conditions and materials.
- Residents volunteered their labor for over a month as the gate was being built.
- Over 300 farmers are able to flood their fields using gravity flow instead of relying on pumps. The first harvest of melons will begin in late July and cotton harvesting will resume in September. Q 2/99

### **Women Gain Needed Skills to Find Work and Improve Self Esteem**

In Turkmenistan, as in most economies, the job market for men is much larger than it is for women. The Junior Achievement Economic Education and Young Entrepreneurs Center conducted surveys to determine which four areas of specialization are most in demand for Turkmen women. With funding from Counterpart, they developed a retraining and employment program in Ashgabad in conjunction with two government structures: the labor exchange and the mayor's office. As a result of 4 months of intensive training:

- 58 women were trained in basic accounting skills, computers, office management and English
- Eleven of the 58 graduates have been placed in new jobs as a result of the NGOs collaboration with government employment agencies.
- Representatives of the labor commission and mayor's office, while presenting certificates of completion to trainees praised the NGOs program, stating that there are many women who would like to work but not enough places like the Center for them to turn for practical skills which will qualify them for work. Q 2/99

### **Disability Rights and Public Awareness in Turkmenistan**

The rights of the disabled in Turkmenistan are often overlooked by others and unknown to the disabled, themselves. After 15 years of working with the mentally handicapped, the leaders of Special Olympics and the Center of Social Adaptation "Umyt" in Turkmenbashi City carried out a roundtable on the "Defense of the Rights of Disabled Children and their Parents." The event involved a comprehensive range of community stakeholders and resulted in the first open dialogue between the disabled, their families, representatives of NGOs and state structures. Results include:

- A working group was formed by the participants to plan ways of jointly solving problems related to the rights of the disabled of Turkmenbashi
- Wheelchairs were distributed to two paraplegics by the Department of Social Welfare - they had been denied this privilege for the previous two years
- The representatives from the local health administration agreed to review existing problems with the medical exam procedure process designed to exempt disabled men from military service
- Twenty-three disabled people and their families participated in an activity resulting in concrete improvements to problems using existing laws, renewing their confidence and catalyzing their desire to become more aware of their rights. Q 2/99

### **NGO Involvement in International Games Increases Turkmen NGO Visibility**

Members of the Turkmenistani NGO *Unikom* earned fourth place at the recent All-CIS "Quiz Bowl" held in Moscow. The televised victory has had a tremendous impact on the popularity of the NGO and has created a renewed stimulus for the development of intellectual games in the country. Programs funded through Counterpart Consortium grant support include: preparing youth to compete in intellectual competitions; promoting an increase in the educational and civic activities of local teenagers; and developing a six-month plan in coordination with Turkmen State University to increase the level of participation of students in intellectual game activities. Q 1/99

### **PRA Training Helps NGO Expand Program and Ag Extension Services to New Villages**

The Director of Kopet Dag NGO, which is currently implementing a Counterpart grant titled "Soy Bean - Food for the Future," participated in the first PRA training activity in Turkmenistan, which was held in the Dashovuz region. As a result, the NGO is now working in three new villages. Community leaders in one of the villages have already helped distribute materials about their model in another village. In the future, the Dashovuz user groups in Turkmenbashi oblast and the organizers of the soy project plan to collaborate on other extension programs for farmers. Q 1/99

### **Rural Women's Club in Turkmenistan Mobilizes Community Support Through Social Partnership**

The Nargiz Women's Club, which works in Seidi, an isolated rural town in Lebap Oblast, has become a model for social partnership and stakeholder collaboration in Turkmenistan, through implementation of a project funded by a Counterpart small grant. Nargiz's activities are regularly described in the local press, leading to well-attended activities. Meetings with teenaged girls about health and women's rights are held in space donated by the local Polyclinic. The local police department has partnered with Nargiz to implement a teenage drug use prevention campaign. Nargiz cooperates actively with the Department of Social Welfare of Seidi to exchange information gathered during activities related to assistance needed by vulnerable women, pensioners and disabled. The NGO has approached the Ministry regarding repairs of equipment needed by disabled people, and, as a result, four wheelchairs were repaired free of charge after having been unoperational for several months, leaving four disabled people immobile. Four private sector firms regularly sponsor seminar costs, and pay for coffee break supplies, and for community dinners for vulnerable groups. Finally, the GORONO (educational board) supports the organization's activities with free space for seminars. Q 1/99

### **Turkmenistan NGO Leads Efforts to Facilitate Refugee Integration into Communities**

The Refugee Assistance Center established by the Patients' Rights NGO, *Ceic Okara* has been running effectively since they received a Counterpart Support grant in September of 1998. Between the months of November and January, the Center provided medical treatment to over 57 refugees and internally displaced persons who had no other alternative source of medical assistance. In addition, the NGO has helped a group of the refugee women to establish an artisan guild. As a result of their excellent rapport and the satisfaction of their beneficiaries, the Ambassador of Afghanistan has paid a visit to the center and has personally thanked the NGO for the important assistance given to Afghan refugees. The Afghan embassy, UNHCR, and the Tajik embassy have all assisted Ceic Okara with free of charge translations of their brochures into Farsi to benefit their constituents. Leaflets have been published in Farsi, Russian and Turkmen describing how to treat five common medical conditions faced by the refugee communities.

Q 1/99

### **NGOs Collaborate to Develop Skills in Humanitarian Assistance Delivery**

The Union of Disabled of Turkmenistan, a Counterpart Consortium grantee will serve as the primary implementing partner to distribute humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups in collaboration with the Counterpart Humanitarian Assistance Program (CHAP). Six other NGOs, all Counterpart grantees/trainees, will act as secondary distribution partners and end users. Fifteen forty-ton containers will soon arrive containing warm weather clothing, shoes, personal care items, kitchen and laundry service equipment, mattresses, bed linens and blankets. This US Embassy approved assistance program will benefit a minimum of 6,000 people initially, and will allow implementing partners to develop sustainable skills in humanitarian assistance delivery. Q 1/99

### **Village Community Cistern Serves as Locally Generated Model for User Associations**

With the support of a Counterpart mini-grant, the 376 community members of Sharau Yap now receive safe drinking water stored in cooperative serdops (cisterns). The final approval from the local health department was achieved after some initial setbacks because of construction problems, but water is now being delivered twice a week to each serdop. Forty-seven families averaging 8 people per family benefit from the 3 serdops in the village. Each serdop supplies approximately 16 families. This community is quickly becoming a model in the oblast, and key committee members will likely play a leading role in the developing oblast-wide water user's association. Q 1/99

### **Turkmenistan Environmental NGOs Strengthen Linkages with Young Activists and Government**

Environmental NGOs were among the first NGOs to begin working in Turkmenistan.

Supported by a number of interventions from Counterpart, including partnership facilitation, grant funding, training and technical assistance, these experienced community leaders are gaining more recognition with official structures and are successfully broadening participation in environmental activism to include more young people. Following are three examples of the results of these efforts:

- The Ashgabad Ecology Club Catena and the Pennsylvania Rural Water User's Association formed a partnership during a USAID-funded Stateside training course in NGO Management and Leadership funded by the AED NIS Exchanges and Training Program and organized by Counterpart in 1997. With an innovative water purification model provided by the US partner, Catena is training young activists and helping them strengthen their own network of contacts.
- The Young Geologists of Turkmenistan organized an Ecological conference for young environmental scientists involving participation of six NGOs, the Ministry of Environment, other state Structures and a local University.
- Two Counterpart grantees, Yashil and Achyk Gapy are collaborating with 8 elementary schools, two universities and the Ministry of Environment in a project to plant trees, and improve ecological awareness in schools. Q 1/99

### **Turkmenistan NGOs Collaborate to Provide Legal Aid to Disabled in Turkmenistan**

As an activity under a Counterpart grant which became operational in November, 1998, the *Center for Social Adaptation Umit* and *Special Olympics of Turkmenbashi* held a "Day of Legal Knowledge" for members of the Turkmenbashi City Blind Society." 28 members and 16 applied to the Center for legal consultations regarding their legislated entitlements. As a result,

- The city agreed to re-locate two families with disabled amputees to move from third to first floor apartments and three additional families with disabled members living in dormitories were provided private apartments;
- After the positive results of the consultations, the Blind Disabled Society decided to establish its own Committee on Rights Protection;
- The Center's volunteer legal counselor (who is also a City attorney in the Mayors office) has submitted a list of disabled families living in dormitories who are eligible for relocation to more appropriate housing; and
- The center received substantial private donations for a youth employment project as a result of increased community visibility. Q 1/99

### **Database Results in Improved Social Service Delivery and Collaboration with State Structures**

The Association of Disabled has successfully developed a database charting the needs, locations, and skills of over 5,215 disabled people in Ashgabad with grant funding from Counterpart Consortium. Following are a number of impacts made possible by this project:

- By analyzing the statistics in the database, the organization was able to render services to over 350 disabled families over the course of the project in the areas of donated clothing, free dinners, health services, information provision, and writing letters to government agencies on their behalf.
- Financial support was provided to 12 disabled persons to pay for needed surgery and treatment in sanatoriums.
- In addition, jobs were located for 21 disabled people through the employment service component of the project.

Young disabled athletes were also able to attend two international sports competitions under the grant and 24 children attended a recreational camp for one month in the summer. Q 1/99

### **NGO Social Service Efforts Forge Dialogue and Collaboration with Government**

The Association of Disabled People of Turkmenistan has provided a number of services to the disabled for several years. With a grant from Counterpart Consortium, they are in the process of developing a database covering their constituency in Ashkabad, the capital city. The goal of the project is to facilitate more effective integration into the community by providing information about the needs, skills and geographic location of the disabled community in Ashkabad. The database has already had a number of impacts on the lives of the NGOs membership and in gaining stronger government recognition. These impacts include:

- Three members have already gotten jobs because the Ministry of Social Welfare was able to identify appropriate candidates by using the database.
- The Ministry of Social Welfare has requested additional information about how they can incorporate the database into their operations
- The NGO is now a distributing partner with the Red Cross, and has used the database to identify 50 recipients of humanitarian assistance in the past month.

The NGO's increased visibility enabled them to successfully raise funds to send two disabled athletes to an international competition in Dubai, where they placed in the top 25% of competing teams. Q 4/98

### **Deputy Minister of Social Welfare Praises Social Partnership Video**

In conjunction with the recent Counterpart Consortium Social Partnership Conference, a 20- minute documentary outlining the concept of social partnership through interviews with well-known people and real life examples in the region was produced and distributed throughout Central Asia. The video was shown at a recent NGO roundtable in Ashghabad between NGOs working in the social sphere and the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare. The Deputy Minister was asked to give her views on social partnership. When it was her turn to address the audience, she began by saying that many of the questions that she had planned to ask of the NGOs and Counterpart in her presentation were answered by the video. She smiled and apologized that she had to completely redo her remarks as a result of the understanding that the video brought her regarding the interrelationship between NGOs, government and business. The Deputy Minister then, recommended that Counterpart show the video to other representatives of government, emphasizing that seeing concrete examples of interaction between the sectors is a critical factor in creating a dialogue. The resulting meeting was one of open discussion between the NGOs and the Representatives of the Ministry. Follow-up activities are being scheduled for the coming months. Q 4/98

### **NGO Involves Women and Rural Community in Innovative Farming Techniques**

With partnership grant funding from Counterpart, NGO Kopet Dag is working with rural communities to introduce soybean production. The participatory activities involved in the crop introduction also provided the first opportunity for villagers to learn about the work of NGOs and the benefits of citizen participation. As a result, women and teenagers, traditionally less integrated into village production schemes, played an active role and increased their visibility as contributors to village welfare. Kopet Dag will follow up by conducting a series of informal roundtables to strengthen community leaders understanding of NGOs and their role in civil society. Q 4/98

### **NGO Collaborates with US Government Agency to Lead Disaster Preparedness Efforts**

Formatsia, an active participant in Counterpart NGO support activities, has established contact with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA). As a result, FEMA is developing plans to conduct disaster relief training in Turkmenistan, in collaboration with Formatsia, which is also expanding the scope of their activities from the narrow focus of earthquakes to a broader capacity of disaster preparedness. Q 4/98



### **NGOs Share Resources and Strength at Grassroots Level**

With strengthened organizational capacity and networking opportunities provided by Counterpart Consortium programs, NGOs in Turkmenistan are beginning to collaborate and share information – an important step toward increasing their influence in civil society. At follow-up roundtables after the recent Counterpart Consortium Social Partnerships Roundtable, many NGO representatives complained that they had nowhere to turn to find information about developing their organizations, where to find financial assistance, and how to develop a project. As a result, the Executive Director of NGO Flamingo in Turkmenbashi, a remote city near the Caspian Sea, announced that his organization would open its doors for consultations to NGOs every Saturday morning and provide free e-mail access. Q 4/98

### **NGO Executes Successful Public Outreach Campaign**

Counterpart grantee Amudarya is successfully increasing the level of ecological awareness of the population in Turkmenistan through a public awareness campaign in the media. After only seven months, staff and members of the NGO have already published 25 articles in a number of newspapers and magazines. In addition to publishing articles, the NGO has sponsored contests, awareness activities and a distance learning competition in collaboration with the Yaroslavl Center of Remote Training. The activities have become a popular source of public information and the NGO has received very positive feedback from local authorities and the media. Q 4/98

### **NGOs Collaborate to Achieve Results**

Participation in Counterpart training workshops provides NGOs with the opportunity to establish contacts with other NGOs. For example, recently the NGO *Nesil*, which works with orphans in the region of Chardjew, described the difficulties and problems of the orphans during a training session. Also attending was an Ashghabad-based NGO *Help to Women*, who decided to collect clothing and shoes for the orphans. These organizations are now in constant contact and are committed to further cooperation. Both NGOs are active participants in Counterpart support programs. Q 4/98

### **NGO Collaborates with Ministry of Education and other NGOs for Curriculum Reform**

By establishing good contact with the GORONO (National school commission within the Ministry of Education), *Yashil* has been able to expand the number of schools using their interactive ecology game. 50 schools now use the game, including one Turkmen language school. This is especially significant because it is the first inclusion of both ecology and interactive teaching methods into the Turkmen language curriculum. Contributing to this increased visibility, three NGOs are utilizing *Yashil* methodology and collaborating with them in a range of activities, resulting in greater community respect, stronger relations with government and expanded media coverage. Q 4/98

**Increased Interest in Training Builds Capacity and Community Awareness** NGOs are requesting specialized trainings to deepen the capacity of their staff and members for the first time in Turkmenistan. A rural agricultural NGO was provided with Turkmeni language training in NGO and Community targeting community stakeholders and program participants, resulting in a 200% increase in the number of members with an understanding of these important concepts. The Women's Union, a government-organized NGO (GONGO) has previously been reluctant to participate actively in Counterpart programs. After attending one training, the director stated that training "opened their eyes to the possibilities of what an organization can do" and has requested additional training for staff and membership. An additional impact of this success will be an improved relationship with the Women's Union and the visibility of outreach and public education efforts across Turkmenistan. Q 4/98

### **NGOs Secure Leveraged Funding and Diversify Sources of Financial Support**

The impact of Counterpart training and technical assistance is demonstrated by the number of NGOs that request assistance in developing strategies and proposals for work with other donors and the improving success rate of those efforts. For example:

- One NGO has been awarded nine sewing machines by the British Know How Fund to begin income-generation activities;
- UNHCR is developing plans to collaborate with two NGOs recommended by Counterpart Q 4/98

### **Accountants and Auditors Association Established with Assistance from Uzbekistan NGO**

After attending two Counterpart Consortium training workshops, Counterpart staff helped the newly formed Association of Accountants and Auditors of Turkmenistan establish contact with a similar association with more experience in Uzbekistan. An exchange visit to Tashkent delivered an array of experience, practical strategies adapted for the Central Asian context, training materials and plans to continue collaboration in the future. As the result of an open house announced in a local newspaper, 14 new members joined the Association, which now includes members from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Department of Tax Inspection and accountants from a number of local and international organizations. At the open house, members also formed a new board of directors and committed to supporting the association with initial membership dues payments and regular submissions of industry news and information to share with other members. Follow-up plans include review of the NGO's charter, the development of fee for service training and a continued partnership with the association in Uzbekistan. Q3/98

### **Turkmenistan NGO Leads Formation of Regional Civics Education Association**

Formed in 1993, Dialogue is a leading civic education NGO in Turkmenistan and the region. They were among the first Turkmen attendees in Counterpart training workshops and have been pro-active participants in Counterpart activities since the office in Turkmenistan opened in 1997. They were also the first recipient of a Counterpart Consortium NGO Support Grant in Turkmenistan in 1995. The civics education manual funded by this grant has been circulated to more than 6 Russian speaking countries and is being used by other NGOs in the CIS. Dialogue has established strong partnerships with a number of dynamic civics education NGOs across the region, including Golubka (Moscow), and two other Counterpart grantees, Tashkent Training Center, and the Association of Young Leaders (Kazakhstan). Based on the success of these partnerships, which involve staff exchanges, curriculum development and cross-training, these partners have formed InterTraining – a regional association of civics education NGOs, which has recently been registered in Russia. The objective is to encourage social partnerships and to institutionalize ongoing exchanges of information and training skills. As a result of one recent collaboration between InterTraining members, 13 students from Turkmenistan won a competition to attend a leadership training in Kazakhstan and returned with new skills that they applied in training 500 additional students in their schools. Q3/98

### **Public Information Resource Center Opened in National Library**

Access to information continues to be an overarching constraint to social and economic development in Turkmenistan. The National Library in Ashgabad logs large numbers of users on a daily basis and houses four NGO offices, but has had not public information center in its facilities. With a variety of support from Counterpart Consortium, including training and facilitation of an equipment donation from the British Embassy, the library has opened a public information center, with specially allocated access to computer equipment for the NGOs housed there. Counterpart informational materials will be distributed here and plans are being developed for collaboration on a serious of round table discussions co-hosted by the Library, its NGO tenants and Counterpart Consortium. Q3/98

### **NGO Agriculture Project Spurs Collaboration with Local Government**

Kopet Dag NGO received a grant from Counterpart in June of this year to carry out an innovative project to develop soybean cultivation in two regions of Turkmenistan. The project focuses also on empowering women living in rural areas to play a greater role in the management of farms and includes training workshops which are designed to take the women from a stage of passive participation to one of active decision-making. During the project design phase, Kopet-Dag formed a working relationship with the local Agriculture Administration, which agreed to provide land for the project free of charge. Kopet Dag has distributed seeds, facilitated meetings of participants (mostly women), conducted training in new cultivation techniques and videotaped training activities for promotional purposes. As a result of this well executed and valuable project, village leaders have agreed to water the test plots free of charge - contributing additional resources to the project from the village level. Q3/98

### **Concrete Support for Vulnerable Citizens Spurs Volunteerism and Charitable Giving**

In July of this year, Nargiz NGO (an active trainee and grantee) was awarded \$300 for submitting the winning project idea to the regional "Women Developing Society" contest organized as part of a Counterpart Consortium constituency building campaign. The idea was very simple: to collect local donations of clothing and household items, repair, clean and distribute them to the NGO's target population (single mothers, families with many children and the elderly). With the \$300 contest prize, they immediately developed a list of the most needy families in their community. They put up fliers to attract volunteers and advertise pick-up points. As a result, Nargiz worked with 10 volunteers to provide 26 families with clothing and other supplies. In order to leverage further this successful project, the NGO contacted Gray Doves International and distributed supplies they provided to an additional 14 people. The local mayor has publicly endorsed these activities and the NGO's work in this remote area has received wide acclaim. Q 3/98

### **New Association Formed to Advocate for Patients' Rights**

There are many physician groups in Turkmenistan that deal with health issues, and strive individually to solve problems in the health sphere. They seldom collaborate and none of them include patient rights on their agendas. After a Counterpart Consortium-sponsored round table discussion on health issues, three separate groups of specialists formed a new Patients' Rights Association. The Association's mission will be to focus specifically on patients' rights, which are not currently included in any discussions of medical professionals in Turkmenistan. Twenty people have already contacted the Patients' Rights Association to register opinions regarding health institutions and the medical delivery system of Turkmenistan. This is a very significant first step toward advocacy in Turkmenistan - where the expression of independent opinions is not usually encouraged. Q2/98

### **NGO Outreach and Networking in Dashovuz Region**

As a result of participation in a number of Counterpart training workshops and other NGO support activities, the Dashovuz English Resource Center (DERC) is trying to expand its established role of information clearinghouse to the NGO community in the Dashovuz region. Recognizing that teachers are a respected and valuable information resource already acknowledged as a source of community outreach, DERC trained 6 teachers in basic NGO concepts learned through attendance at Counterpart NGO and Community Training Workshops. These teachers are now providing outreach to community leaders, providing basic information and referrals to Counterpart for additional support. Q2/98

### **Event-based Fundraising Concept Successfully Introduced in Turkmenistan**

Fundraising is a little-understood concept in Turkmenistan and there is a very weak tradition of corporate or individual support for NGO efforts. When challenged to generate corporate support to qualify for a Counterpart Corporate Challenge Grant, a dynamic NGO planning an English language summer camp organized a fundraising barbecue, collaborating with Peace Corps volunteers. Although it rained on the day of the event, over 300 paying guests attended and generated more than \$2,000 for the project. The large attendance also generated dramatically increased understanding of event-based fundraising in Turkmenistan. Q2/98

### **New Association Created After Counterpart Healthcare Roundtable**

As a result of a Healthcare Roundtable facilitated by Counterpart, 3 health-focused NGOs have decided to join efforts and create a new **Association of Patients' Rights Protection**. The founding members are utilizing the Counterpart NGO Resource Library, participating in training and working with staff to develop a grant proposal. Q1/98

### **NGO Offers Peer Counseling in Registration Procedures**

As a result of the Roundtable on "Juridical Problems Facing NGOs, Counterpart grantee **Ynam**, has begun to provide consultations free of charge to NGO representatives seeking advice on how to complete registration documents. They will develop a modest grant proposal to enable them to provide this assistance without detracting from their current juridical and psychological consultations and women's crisis hotline activities. Ynam was recently awarded a \$24,000 grant from Soros to follow-up on the activities begun under the Counterpart grant. In a recent radio interview, Ynam credited Counterpart training as one reason for their achievement. Q1/98

### **Improved Media Relations Gains Vocal Advocates and Increased visibility for NGOs**

4 local journalists interested in forming an organization of their own have attended "NGO and Community training." As a result, they have continued to advocate on behalf of NGOs through published articles in the newspapers: "Neutral Turkmenistan" and "Ashgabad". Q1/98

### **NGO-Government Collaboration in Education Reform**

Dialogue, Counterpart's first grantee in Turkmenistan, serves as an important link between the education system and the government. Their initial civic education project included the production of textbooks on civic education, which have been approved by the government of Turkmenistan. Dialogue will now add a teacher-training component to expand the use of this curriculum. Dialogue members believe that this activity will also enhance the work of teachers in community development and inspire them to become more active in the work of NGOs. Q4/97

### **GTD/NET Delegates Continue to Use New-found Skills**

During a site visit, GTD Program returnees, Nikita Barsuk and Timur Berkiliev reported surprising interest among local government officials and communities in development of a water user's association. The returnees, particularly Mr. Berkiliev, were eager to apply knowledge they gained during their visit to water user's associations in the United States (organized by Counterpart) in their comments during meetings with official and community members. It is clear that their exposure to the concept in the United States had a positive impact in their participation on the site visit. Q4/97

### **NGOs Share Lessons Learned and Establish Collaborative Linkages**

Three NGOs with similar missions were not aware of each other's existence. The American Cultural Center (Chargew), the English Resource Center (Dashovuz) and the Women's Club (Nebit Dag) were among the most active participants at Counterpart's national NGO conference. These NGOs exchanged vital information regarding registration strategies and will work together to finalize registration as their first collaborative effort. Q4/97

### **NGO Receives Targeted Assistance from High Level Government Official**

NGO Begench has been unable to complete the registration process for the past year. At December's NGO Conference, Executive Director Marina Naramanova spoke about the difficulties of NGO registration in a conference session on challenges facing the NGO community in general. As a result of Naramanova's willingness to discuss issues in constructive terms, Deputy Minister of Justice Tagieva - who also participated in the conference - offered her assistance. As a result, all documentation has been submitted and formal approval is expected in a few weeks year. Hopefully this example will set a precedent for future registration activities and a standard registration policy for all NGOs. Q4/97

## UZBEKISTAN

### **NGO Introduces Humanitarian Law into Curriculum of Tashkent Law Institute**

In addition to a lack of legal information about human rights law, progress in this regard in Uzbekistan has been very slow and recent terrorist activities have challenged the system even more. In order to address this, Counterpart grantee the *Center for Studies of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law* recently published 2000 copies of a book entitled "International Humanitarian Law," which examines human rights in a state of emergency and armed conflicts. The book will be used for 36 academic hours in the curriculum of the Tashkent Law Institute as a trial for permanent inclusion as a textbook. If approved, the text will become integrated into the national curriculum for international law. Q 1/00

### **Income Generation Activity Partners the Army with the Disabled in Uzbekistan**

*Umidvorlik*, which focuses on disabled children in Tashkent, recently conducted PRA research that identified income generation for families as a critical need to improve the lives of disabled children. In response, the NGO gathered ten sewing machines from within the community and through a German Embassy contribution and began an income-generating project. Ten women will receive training to start the project. *Umidvorlik* is already finalizing the first contract with the Ministry of Defense to sew bedclothes for the Army. Q 1/00

### **Uzbek NGO Receives Support of UK Embassy**

The Fergana Branch of the *Society for Consumer Rights Protection* has been a regular visitor of the Kokand NGO Support Center for the past 6 months. The NGO was in need of technical equipment to produce handout materials for its seminars and a newsletter on consumer rights for youth. The NGO has grown steadily and needs additional support to meet the demands of its constituency. With facilitation from Counterpart the NGO met with the Ambassador of the UK in Uzbekistan. Impressed by NGO's desire and efforts to educate youth, the Ambassador, through the British Know How Foundation, granted the NGO with a computer, printer, and copy machine. With these valuable resources the NGO continues its activities with even greater zeal. Q 1/00

### **Membership Base Expands as a Result of Counterpart Training**

Grassroots level health reform in the Fergana Valley is targeting rural medical stations (SVPs) serving communities with basic primary health care. In collaboration with Abt. Associates, Counterpart provided Association Development and Governance training for SVP workers from all over the region, with assistance from an initiative group working to organize an Association of Medical Workers. As a result of the training, the General Assembly of the Association received membership applications from 35 SVPs – equaling 600 total staff members. Their accumulated human and material resources will effectively promote health reforms in remote areas. Q 1/00

### **Tashkent and Nukus NGOs Collaborate to Assist Remote Regions of Karakalpakstan**

There is a great deal of work for NGOs in political, environmental, economic and social domains of Karakalpakstan. This amount of work is hard to accomplish with only one NGO's scarce human and financial resources. With the skills learned at Counterpart seminars, *Renaissance* of Nukus and *Engineering Ecology* of Tashkent consolidated their efforts to develop and fund an ambitious joint project in five regions of Karakalpakstan. With funding support from the Ebert Foundation, the NGOs will conduct seminars on legal, human rights, health, and environmental issues for women and youth. Strengthened also by informational support received from the Ministry of Health of Karakalpakstan, this coalition will be useful and advantageous for its beneficiaries. Q 1/00

### **Fledgling Youth Club Network Unites 67 Young Leaders in Uzbekistan**

The *Bukhara Information and Cultural Center* founded the Young Leaders Club six months ago to provide counseling, training and technical assistance to the students of Bukhara Technological University. More and more students have been turning to the Young Leaders Club for guidance and support, resulting in two new Clubs opening at the University with 25 members each. These 3 youth unions will work in partnership to develop youth leadership abilities and to learn methods of tolerance and conflict resolution. 67 young leaders have started preparing their first project, a celebration of International Youth Day. Q 1/00

### **NGO Secures Unprecedented Free National Access to Televised Media**

Given the notorious censorship on Uzbekistan television and reluctance of national channels to give free air time, *Gender: Innovation and Development*, an active participant in a number of Counterpart training workshops, was bestowed a rare honor. The NGO will produce and air a number of special programs about NGO topics, including gender policy, environment, legal and economical education, and development of non-profit organizations. This unique opportunity will help the NGO reach the hearts and minds of its constituents through one of the most powerful media instruments. Q 1/00

### **NGO Film Helped an Official Win Parliamentary Election**

The recent parliamentary election was a significant event in the political and social life of Uzbekistan. Each candidate led a campaign to secure the votes of the citizens. One Bukhara Region candidate was elected to Parliament by voters who saw him in a film produced by NGO *Shod*, a Counterpart grantee. With support from Counterpart and the Eurasia Foundation, the NGO shot a series of four videos to publicize Success Stories of NGOs and state institutions that strive to bring about positive changes in Uzbekistan. National and regional channels aired the films. The former pro-rector of the Academy of State Construction, now MP and Consultant to the President of Uzbekistan, telephoned the *Shod* leader to express his gratitude for the film. He said - "Thanks to this film, the electorate learned about my work and about me. As a result, I was elected". Q 1/00

### **NGO Provides Health Education via Local Television and Radio Stations**

For more than five years the *Association of Pediatricians of Bukhara* has been expanding and developing its programs. To reach a wider audience through its health educational program, the Association is working in cooperation with the Bukhara Regional Television, which agreed to air six 10-minute educational shows on hepatitis, hygiene and other topics and is paying for 50% of the spots. Also, having applied skills received at Counterpart training "Public Education through the Media" the NGO has contracted with a local radio station to broadcast a series of health programs on smoking and drug use. The NGO expects that these efforts, backed up by the powerful mass media, will raise the public awareness of health issues in Bukhara Region. Q 1/00

### **Business-NGO Partnership Provides Expanded Internet Access in Bukhara**

Internet access continues to be extremely limited in Uzbekistan, especially outside of Tashkent. The *Bukhara Information and Cultural Center* has successfully entered into a representational relationship with the leading private sector Internet provider in Uzbekistan (Naytov). This win-win situation means greatly enhanced Internet access for Bukhara and enhanced financial security and an expanded constituency base for the BICC. Q 1/00

### **NGO Fundraising Insured Financial Support for 62 Disabled Persons**

The *Karakalpak Society for the Disabled* has a vast target group in Karakalpakstan, where the disabled population is comparatively large and local sources of financial support are limited. Having attended Counterpart seminar in fundraising, and after receiving consultations on organizational development at Nukus NGO Support Center, the *Society for Disabled* launched a successful fundraising campaign with the following results:

- The local hokimiat has granted 7-room premises to the NGO.
- The NGO bought an automobile with donated funds.
- Local private sector support in 1999 totaled \$5,350.
- 62 disabled persons have received financial support since then. Q 1/00

### **NGO and Ombudsman Promote Implementation of Legislative Reform**

One of many barriers to improved human rights in Uzbekistan is the lack of knowledge among teaching professors, State structures and the general public. For example, law enforcement officials don't know how new legislation should affect their conduct and performance. Counterpart grantee *Center for Studies of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law* and the Ombudsman of the Parliament of Uzbekistan have signed an MOU, making the commitment to collaborate to address this problem and to increase general public understanding of the new law. In addition to conducting an on-going series of workshops, they will design special training programs for law enforcement officials, teaching professors and State Institutions. Q 1/00

### **Service Delivery Leads to Tangible Success in Advocacy and Social Partnership**

*KRIDI's* paramount goal is integrating disabled children and adolescents into general education and public life. Having participated in a full range of Counterpart capacity building activities, including a partnership with the National Parent Network on Disability in Washington, DC, *KRIDI* has put theories into practice. For example,

- In partnership with district kindergartens, *KRIDI* has introduced 27 children with disabilities into general kindergartens over the past 2 years. The integration has brought positive changes. Parents of disabled children claim that their kids "have acquired an intelligent look", "can eat by their own" and "partake in all the shows". Other parents state that their children "have grown kinder" and "feel compassion".
- Partnership relations with the Institute for Supplementary Education have provided for extracurricular learning, such as drawing and music classes. 70 disabled children and their healthy peers come to *KRIDI* 3 times a week to learn and play together. There they, along with their parent, exchange life experiences. Q 1/00

### **Counterpart Trainee Expands Services With Diversified Funding Sources in Uzbekistan**

Established in early 1999, NGO *Ishonch* needed financial resources to implement its programs to provide information and support to rural women and children. With training and technical assistance from Counterpart Consortium, through NGO Resource Centers in both Tashkent and Kokand, *Ishonch* has recently secured grant funding from three donors. This increased skill in project development and fundraising enables the NGO to conduct 84 training seminars in rural areas, and 220 training seminars in makhallas on women's rights, family planning and health issues, as well as provide legal counseling to vulnerable population and an electronic library to students. Q 4/99

### **Uzbekistan NGO Sustains Constituent Services After Donor Funding Expires in Uzbekistan**

Lack of awareness about their rights, in part due to government reluctance to disseminate the information, is a significant problem for the disabled community in Uzbekistan. With a grant from Counterpart, *Matonat Club* developed a program to address the problem. Although the grant concluded almost a year ago, the NGO has been able to sustain the service, which is still delivering valuable results, including:

- disabled children from 11 families were accepted to kindergarten for free;
- 20 disabled children have been granted free access to a swimming pool;
- a new NGO modeled on *Matonat's* successful program was registered;
- 53 disabled persons were provided with jobs; and
- a disabled-owned company received an import and currency conversion license. Q 4/99



### **Women's Crisis Centers' Network Develops in Uzbekistan**

In the period of social and economic transition women and children are most susceptible to hardships. Women suffer from unemployment, domestic violence, and rights infringement. *SABR*, the Samarkand Crisis Center, following Counterpart seminars on strategic planning and NGO development, conducted special on-the-job training for initiative women's groups in Karshi, Andijan and Fergana. Subsequently, affiliate crisis centers were opened in these cities with the support of USIS and the MacArthur Foundation. The crisis centers started providing services to the population, such as legal and psychological consultations, family planning seminars and one-on-one consultations with young married couples. Crisis centers are gaining popularity in communities, even with men. Q 4/99

### **Samarkand Women NGOs Establish Formal Coalition**

For the past couple of years Samarkand has been witnessing the growth and development of increased women's activity. Still, women's NGOs lack informational and technical resources, as well as coordination of their activities. The leaders of women's NGOs that have been involved in a Counterpart training program and received a series of consultations on coalition building took the initiative to consolidate their efforts. In September the Ministry of Justice registered a Union of 10 women's NGOs in Samarkand. The combined human and material resources of the Union as well as a focused approach on women's issues will be used to improve the status of women in the Samarkand Region. Q 4/99

### **Kokand NGOs Form Coalition to Advocate for Reform**

The impact of NGO activity is often weakened by the inability to coordinate activities and formalize collaboration among NGOs. The Kokand NGO Support Center has been facilitating meetings of five active NGOs that recently formalized their activities into an NGO Club. The mission of this ad hoc coalition is to strengthen cooperation and interaction within the NGO community in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan and to strengthen NGOs' external influence. Q 4/99

### **Media Coverage of Elections in Uzbekistan Increased by Association of Journalists**

There is a lack of objective media coverage of electoral campaigns in Uzbekistan. Journalists are very cautious in writing about parliamentary or presidential elections, as the local authorities are very sensitive about this matter. Following a TTAP exercise conducted for the members of the Uzbek Association of Journalists, which explored the strengths of the NGO in contacting stakeholders, the Association used its strengthened vision to secure financial assistance from the Ebert Foundation and conducted a seminar entitled "Civil Society and Elections." The seminar convened 19 well-known journalists from all parts of Uzbekistan. As a result, 16 new members joined the Association. More importantly, it changed the journalists' approach to writing. Thus, the number of articles about elections has increased, which provides not only positive information but also informs readers about the drawbacks and limitations of electoral campaigns. The hundred articles in 12 newspapers have been a valuable addition to making the elections a more transparent event for the voters. Q 4/99

### **Legal Knowledge and Fundraising Skills Enhance Sustainability for Fergana Valley NGO**

Lack of knowledge about how to raise funding effectively within the context of an unfavorable tax policy in Uzbekistan is a barrier to diversifying NGO funding sources. Kokand Charitable Fund *Jamila* wanted to raise funds to support a new project to provide training and home-based jobs for disabled girls, but they thought that taxes would take any funds they could raise from a fundraising event. At a joint Counterpart-GTD seminar on *NGO Accountability and Transparency*, *Jamila* learned more about tax policy and about the successful fundraising experience of other NGOs. As a result, they raised \$875 through a charitable concert and were able to retain the funding for use to purchase machinery for an embroidery workshop for 22 disabled girls, most of whom are confined to wheelchairs. Q 4/99

### **NGO Leaders Participate in Parliamentary Elections**

In December's National and Local legislative elections, a number of NGO leaders ran for office because they see participation as an avenue to increase their influence for democratic reform. Four of the five NGO candidates in national parliamentary elections represent Counterpart target NGOs and a number of NGOs leaders throughout the country also ran in local elections. While none of them were elected, the participation of the Third Sector in political life of the country in such a scale is unprecedented and marks high potential and sustainable development of non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan. Q 4/99

### **NGO Spurs Active Participation in Elections Among Makhalla Residents in Fergana Valley**

According to statistical data, since 1995 there have been no women representing their own interests in either District or City Deputy Councils and Parliament from the Fergana Valley. Counterpart Consortium supported the project by the *Businesswomen's Association* to establish an Election Club, eventually gathering 68 members. The Club conducted 4 seminars in makhallas and consulted with 60 makhalla residents. As a result of NGO activities, 8 women and 2 men were registered to run for office, and 45 other persons have been actively involved in upcoming elections as observers or proxies. This is a landmark in the Fergana Region, because community leaders are taking the opportunity to bring about the change. Q 4/99

### **Students Advocate for Rights with Skills and Information from NGO Project in Uzbekistan**

It is common practice for educational institutions to force students to provide labor and materials for repairs at their own expense. When Bukhara State University attempted this practice with 12 members of the Youth Club organized by *Bukhara Information and Culture Center*, a Counterpart grantee, they had the skills and knowledge to address the problem. With additional consultations with the NGO and the Human Rights Committee, they negotiated with the University administration to avoid the unfair assignment of labor and expense. Q 4/99

### **NGO Election Observers Participate in Karakalpakstan Parliamentary Elections**

NGOs participating in the October meeting of the NGO Club of Karakalpakstan decided to become more involved in fostering citizen participation in fair elections. The NGO *Center for Public Research* conducted a seminar for NGOs on observers' role and participation in the election campaign. The Nukus Support Center's staff provided consultations to NGO leaders on registration under the Central Electoral Committee. 27 NGO representatives were registered as independent observers and took part in the election process. This is the first and only precedent in Uzbekistan for this kind of activity aimed at making the elections more democratic. Q 4/99

### **Individual Private Farmers Gain Increased Access to Inputs in Karakalpakstan**

Agricultural development in Karakalpakstan largely depends on the establishment of a supportive environment for private farming, which is going very slowly. Individual farmers have access to machinery only after state-run farms have finished with them, and individual purchase of machinery is very expensive. The NGO *Farmer's Center*, a Counterpart grantee, is a permanent member of a Ministry of Agriculture working group on agriculture, along with heads of state farms, hokimiats, and the Cabinet of Ministers. They used this platform to advocate for a solution – the establishment of agricultural cooperatives. As a result, four cooperatives, managed by the farmers themselves, have been established to provide equipment and services to individual farmers. Q 4/99

### **Karakalpak Farmers Lobby Government for Enforcement of Legislated Tax Breaks**

The Farmer's Center, a Karakalpakstan NGO in Uzbekistan and Counterpart grantee, has been conducting seminars and follow-on consultations on economic, agricultural and legal issues for farmers from several Karakalpak regions. As a result, farmers are now aware that they have been paying a "road tax" on rented vehicles from which they are legally exempt. The NGO helped the farmers contact the Chairman of the Association of Private Farms, a government entity, who agreed to intercede on their behalf with the Tax Committee. As a result, 12 private farmers were declared exempt from paying the road tax. Q 3/99

### **NGO Recognized for Positive Role in Economic Education Reform in Uzbekistan**

Junior Achievement, a Counterpart partnership grantee, has been conducting training seminars for schoolteachers of economics. JA has been working hard to provide teachers with professional training in Uzbekistan by introducing comprehensive, diverse and contemporary methods of teaching economics. The Ministry of Education acknowledged the effectiveness of the training, the NGO's professional experience, as well as the great need for economic education in secondary schools. JA is now included in the educational program in the State Program of Teachers Professional Development. In September, JA will start its program for 60 teachers of Samarkand, Urgench and Ferghana. Q 3/99

### **NGO Leadership Spurs Official Action to Support Makhalla Efforts to Improve Programs Supporting Children and Youth in Uzbekistan**

Counterpart Consortium's NGO & Community training workshop was conducted for Makhalla chairmen in Namangan recently in cooperation with the *Namangan Children's Fund*. The Children's Fund then conducted similar seminars in four districts for Makhalla representatives and State officials. Following the workshops a meeting to discuss children and youth issues was organized by the Children's Fund, Makhalla representatives and the City Hokimiat that included district Hokimiats, parents and youth. The need to provide positive social activities for children and youth was identified. The City Hokimiat is granting playgrounds and buildings to four makhalla committees who promise to develop programs for children and youth. Initial thoughts are to offer programs in language study, household management and career guidance with future programs in leadership development. Q 3/99

### **BWA's Credibility Affects Business Practices in Bukhara**

Small business leaders in Bukhara face difficulties securing financial credit from the Bukhara Oblast Labor Exchange for Business Development. The minimum credit limit of 500,000 sum made credit recovery almost impossible for businesswomen who mainly run small trade enterprises. The Business Women's Association of Bukhara -- long supported by Counterpart -- approached the Head of the Labor Exchange with a proposal to reduce the credit minimum, thereby facilitating the credit application for local businesswomen. The Labor Exchange in Uzbekistan accepted the proposal by BWA and instituted a reduced minimum of 50,000 sum. Q 3/99

### **Counterpart Training Successfully Leverages Makhalla Support**

Earlier this year a training session on NGO & Community was adapted for makhallas and conducted by Counterpart staff in Uzbekistan. At the seminar the leader of Bukhara Artisan Development Center, offered to help the Makhalla Chairman develop a plan to address the high numbers of unemployed women in the Makhalla. As a result of this cooperation, a sewing shop with on-the-job training for 15 women was opened in Bukhara and an embroidery shop was opened in an outlying village. Makhallas brought women together with NGO-artisan masters to teach women traditional crafts, which will bring additional income to their families and, moreover, provide needed profession. Q 3/99

### **NGOs Leverage Makhalla Support as a result of Counterpart Training**

Poor medical habits, together with evidently weak health services are an ongoing problem for Karakalpakstan residents. After attending an adapted Counterpart training on NGO and the Community, the Makhalla leaders in Nukus, Uzbekistan developed a program to work jointly with the local NGO, *The Center for Culture of Health Preservation*, to improve the medical education of Makhalla residents. The Makhalla and NGO opened a club and convened listeners for lectures on health issues. 196 Makhalla residents of all ages participated in the six lectures conducted by NGO specialists. The Club will continue to operate on a continuous basis to promote healthy lifestyles to Makhalla residents. Q 3/99

### **NGO in Karakalpakstan Leads Grassroots Environmental Education Reform**

Despite the severe tangible effects of the Aral Sea disaster in Karakalpakstan, the environment curriculum in schools remains inadequate. Counterpart grantee, NGO *Shagala* has been addressing this problem by conducting seminars with teachers to introduce environmental topics and play-based methodologies. This innovative approach was so popular and has been in such great demand that the NGO has trained 300% more teachers than originally planned. As a result of participation in NGO programs, teachers and students in eight schools have formed clubs to promote environmental awareness in Uzbekistan. Q 3/99

### **Agreement between Center of Women-Leaders and Sergely Department of National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. (NDPU)**

The Center of Women Leaders provides many useful seminars for members of the community, but the Center has been unable to leverage strong financial support for its programs. Based on concepts introduced at the Regional Conference on Social Partnership and ongoing consulting from Counterpart, the Center was able to successfully develop a program with the Sergely Department of NDPU. The two organizations are working together to conduct joint training on the status of women-leaders, the image of businesswomen and the essence of small business, and computer competence. According to the agreement all expenses will be paid by NDPU. The first seminar on businesswomen status was held in June (20 participants, 6 of them were representatives of Makhalla). There is a plan to conduct 12 seminars during this year for different women's groups of different ages, as well as local leaders and youth. Q 2/99

### **Center Perzent uses PRA to Determine Foreign Assistance Needs in Uzbekistan**

Center Perzent is one of the local organizations responsible for distributing foreign humanitarian aid provided by CHAP and other International organizations. To ensure transparency and needs-based distribution, the Center worked with Counterpart trainers to develop skills in Participatory Rural Appraisals, thereby involving recipient populations at all stages. Participants of the PRA training in Chimbay Region of Karakalpakstan defined criteria for poverty and determined selection criteria for families that will receive humanitarian aid. By surveying 700 farms in Chimbay District, the Center was able to determine which families were most in need. Q 2/99

### **"Renaissance" Carrying Out the Orphan Children Hygienic Education Program**

The Uzbekistan NGO *Renaissance* conducted a survey of over 200 children in the Karakalpak orphanage *Mekhribanlik Uyi* and found that 90% of the 148 children between the ages of 6 and 9 and 60% of children between the ages of 10 and 16 lacked basic knowledge about sanitary hygienic practices. *Renaissance* developed an education campaign using local physicians and employing teaching methodologies, such as role-playing, illustrated handouts and theatrical performances. As a result of the campaign, which was supported with Counterpart training and funding as well as collaboration from the Ministry of Health, 97% of all children have basic knowledge about elementary hygienic rules. Also resulting from this success was the introduction by the Ministry of Health of a weekly radio program on sanitary-hygienic education. Q 2/99

### **Business Association Advocates for Members in Uzbekistan**

The Chamber of Commerce, a governmental structure networking throughout the country, introduced a mandatory membership for all businesses in the region. Membership fees are quite substantial. Fergana BWA has advocated on behalf of their members to reduce the fee. As a result, the Chamber entry fee for BWA members was decreased by 50%, and all BWA members are exempt from the annual membership fee. The leader of BWA credits their participation in Counterpart's Advocacy seminar for the action that their organization has undertaken. Q 2/99

### **Youth Forum in Samarkand**

For the first time ever in Samarkand, ten Samarkand-based NGOs, together with the youth-focused political party *Fidokor*, convened a conference entitled "Forum of Youth Organizations." Topics discussed at the Forum included the role, programs and impact of NGO activities in the region for youth leaders, businesspeople, education officers and government officials. Counterpart-trained leaders from local NGOs facilitated the Forum workshops. The Forum provided a mechanism for NGOs in the region to demonstrate their capacity and graphically present successful development of each Samarkand NGO. Since the Forum took place, NGO participants experience a greater flow of visitors to their offices for information, counseling and other services. Q 2/99

### **Social Partnership Mobilizes Youth Activism in Uzbekistan**

Shagala Ecological School, a Counterpart Consortium grantee, organized community ecological activities – cleaning the territory of garbage and other wastes. 140 schoolchildren cleaned a big area in Nukus. The city Hokimiyat provided a garbage cart; Coca-Cola Company provided refreshments, and a private club provided a disco party. The action was both useful for the city and enjoyable for children. Q 2/99

### **Tashkent Public Education Center Leverages Support for Civics Education**

As a result of Counterpart Consortium training on strategic planning, members of the Tashkent Public Education Center were able to identify a strategy to identify a wider audience to use a Center-published book for middle school students "Us and the Constitution." Based on the Center's new strategy, the book was recommended by the Institute of Higher qualification of teachers as a handbook for students at secondary schools. The Center also translated the book into Uzbek language and printed 10,000 copies. Q 2/99

### **NGO Enjoys Partnership with Governments of Three Countries.**

The Association of Physicians of Uzbekistan (APU) is currently part of a three-country project to share medical research from the US, Switzerland and Uzbekistan. The APU is working in close collaboration with the Uzbek Ministry of Health and Ministry of Communication, and local NGO medical specialists working with specialists of foreign countries. TTAP exercises with the APU have indicated a need for the organization to have more ongoing dialogue with government to ensure their support. Skillful facilitation assistance helped the organization realize that cooperation with the government contributes to the sustainability of the NGO. At the recent tele-bridge with all three countries, the President of APU sat with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan. Q 2/99

### **Social Partnership for Children in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan**

Following their participation in a Social Partnership seminar, the Namangan Children's Fund conducted a number of activities to gain support of governmental agencies and local businesses. The efforts quickly provided results. The Fund organized a concert for 200 children. The concert hall, granted by a political party, was decorated with the help of Kamolot, Youth Fund and Regional Department of the Ministry of Education. The concert was followed by a dinner, organized with support of the local food market, and distribution of presents donated by a local factory. This day became a really great holiday for children, thanks to efforts of each sector of the society. Q 2/99

### **KRIDI Parent Network Engages Government of Uzbekistan in Inclusive Education Reform**

Permission for disabled children to partake in public education is granted by the Medical-Educational Committee of the local Educational Department, which categorizes all disabled children as able to attend public school, special education school or as unfit for any public education at all. Until KRIDI lobbied successfully for inclusion on the Committee, members were not motivated to increase the number of special needs children in the public school system. KRIDI has already influenced the Committee to allow three children to attend public school - an initial step toward inclusive education in Uzbekistan. Q 1/99

### **Uzbekistan NGO Wins Government Contract to Provide Computer Training**

Internet training is not widely available, even to professional government staff.. The quality of the computer skills courses offered by Counterpart grantee IROSAM has attracted the attention of not only the public at large, but also that of the local and national government. IROSAM recently received a contract to train 40 upper-level government employees, from all regions of Uzbekistan, in Internet technology. In addition to significantly improving the image of the NGO in the eyes of the state, this contract - with more to follow - has contributed to the diversity of IROSAM's funding sources, and provided a valuable example to other NGOs in Samarkand Region and the rest of the country. Q 1/99

### **NGO and Ministry of Education Collaborate in Innovative Orphanage Support Program**

Following a Counterpart-inspired roundtable/seminar on "Social Partnership," Counterpart grantees the Farmers' Center approached the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan (Uzbekistan) Ministry of Education with a proposal for a pilot project, calling for the establishment of a mini-farm on the grounds of Orphanage No. 1 in Khodjeli. Not only did the Ministry approve the 15-month project, but it assigned teachers to work with the children and to supervise distribution of the fresh vegetables and other products grown on the farm. Q 1/99

### **Junior Achievement of Uzbekistan Engage Ministry of Education in Curriculum Reform**

Curriculum reform has traditionally been the sole province of the State. Junior Achievement (JA) has adapted a highly acclaimed US applied economics curriculum for use in secondary schools. While the National Ministry of Education was supportive, local authorities continued to create roadblocks. For example, three Tashkent teachers were threatened with dismissal for employing non-standard material in their classes. After a series of meetings, demonstration lessons and briefing sessions for Ministry officials, the Minister of Education has provided a letter commending Junior Achievement's efforts and authorizing its use in schools. Now, all teachers trained in Junior Achievement methodology receive a certificate and a copy of the Minister's letter. In addition, Ministry of Education officials have a stronger understanding of NGOs role in a civil society. Q 1/99

### **Uzbekistan NGO Publication Increases Government Recognition of Women's Rights**

In 1998, Mekhri published a resource guide in both Russian and Uzbek languages entitled "Women's Rights as Human's Rights", based on a model developed by the US NGO Sisterhood is Global. The publication has been widely distributed among government officials and Government Organized NGOs, including the National Women's Committee. Executive Director Flora Pirnazarova says, "publishing this book has opened new doors for us with local government officials." The Deputy Mayor of the district where Mekhri offices are located has invited their participation as a member of the Committee on Public Organizations, which will enable them to affect policy and assist other NGOs in their neighborhood. Q 1/99

### **Uzbekistan NGO and Government Health Officials Target Young Mothers For Training**

Having noted the lacking abilities of young mothers to provide quality preventative health care to their children, the Namagan Children's Foundation joined forces with the oblast health authorities and Khokkimiyat to devise a program of children's health care. The local state health care clinic was drafted in to provide training to these mothers, as a result of which 240 have learned the basics of caring for their children, all the while receiving a state student's stipend. Q 1/99

### **NGO Wins Legal Wrangle with Uzbekistan Tax Committee**

The NGO Women & Society of Uzbekistan conducts seminars throughout Tashkent Region and has been successful in attaining grant support from foundations and private sector sponsorship, enabling them to purchase office equipment for their work. Recently, tax authorities assessed substantial property taxes and associated penalties, that the NGO could not afford to pay. Armed with a handbook published by Counterpart Grantee the Association of Accountants and Auditors, leaders of the NGO met with tax officials and proved that NGOs are exempt from property taxes. The NGO won the case and the tax bill was rescinded. Q 1/99

### **NGO, Local Government and Makhalla Leaders Collaborate to Provide Integrated Community Services in Fergana Valley**

Without suitable premises to provide for the education and health-care needs of the children under its care, the Namangan Children's Foundation approached the Regional Khokkimiyat and Republican "*Makhalla*" Foundation with a proposal to solve common problems by joint effort. The NGO participated in Counterpart's Regional Social Partnership Conference in September 1998. They were able to find many areas for cooperation, as a result of which the Foundation now boasts a thoroughly renovated home, where the NCF and "*Makhalla*" have established a children's first aid and examination room, a mobile library, a computer room and a "School for Citizen Initiatives." Children's Foundation Director Natalya Ryazantseva maintains that Counterpart's conference and follow-up exercises convinced her that NGOs must not only demand, but must be willing and able to offer services and mutual benefits to potential partners. Q 1/99

### **NGO Provides Job Skill Training to Disabled Constituency in Uzbekistan**

With unemployment figures among the disabled perennially high, this vulnerable group is forced to subsist upon meager and diminishing benefits made available by state social welfare authorities. With this in mind, the Vocational School of the Karakalpakstan Disabled Society designed a computer skills vocation training program for disabled people, including a learn-at-home element for the non-ambulatory. To date, 603 people have received training, with slightly less than 25% finding work soon after, thanks to skills acquired at the courses. Q 1/99

### **Association of Physicians of Uzbekistan Gains Increased Role in Health Policy**

Following a Counterpart Training and Technical Assistance Plan training, the Association of Physicians of Uzbekistan (APU) approached the Ministry of Health with a proposal for cooperation. APU identified greater integration with governmental health structures as one of their most pressing developmental needs. As a result, members of the APU are now full members of the Ministry's Committees on Licensing, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Technology and Privatization, as well as having representation on the Board of the College of Physicians. In this way, the APU is better able to serve both its membership, as well as the population of Uzbekistan, by having input into the creation of an improved, fully professional health service. The APU Project Director said, "the TTAP served as a stimulus to both organizational development and advocacy efforts." Q 1/99

### **Golden Heritage of the Aral**

Unemployment and poor living conditions make the Muynak Region of one of the most desolate areas of Karakalpakstan. Fishing and fish processing was the major industry before the Aral Sea receded and turned the Muynak port into a desert and ship graveyard. Golden Heritage has trained 22 women in traditional karakalpak embroidery skills and has helped them sell their products through Consortium partner Aid to Artisan craft fairs. Based on the success of this project, Golden Heritage recently won a grant from the Open Society Institute to expand their work in poverty alleviation through income generation. Counterpart training and technical assistance helped them develop the successful project and proposal. Q 1/99

### **Uzbekistan Association Advocates for Government Approval of a Member Certification Program**

Although the Avitsenna Association of Pediatricians of Bukhara Oblast in Uzbekistan has long been making a contribution to the professional skills of its membership by offering intensive training courses, health authorities refused to acknowledge or validate these improved skills. By conducting a focused campaign of advocacy on behalf of its membership, the Association was able to reach an agreement with the authorities, authorizing Avitsenna to certify physicians and other health practitioners as pediatricians, therapists and first aid providers. To date, 250 health care workers have thus been certified, allowing them to work in any hospital. Q 1/99

### **NGO Collaboration Spurs Civic Participation Among Youth in Samarkand**

More than half the population of Uzbekistan is under the age of 16. Youth involvement is critical for the sustainability of civil society and the NGO sector in general. Center Ayol, an NGO working on women's issues in Samarkand, recognized that no NGO in Samarkand was targeting this valuable stakeholder and tapped Counterpart's database and NGO contacts to identify other NGOs with whom to work in developing youth outreach programs. As a result, Center Ayol and NGO Turon collaborated to provide youth leadership training to 26 students. Working with two international organizations – the Open Society Institute and ACTR/ACCELS, these newly trained youth leaders have formed their own organization. They have participated in a summer debate camp and are now helping other student leaders form clubs in four schools in Samarkand. Q 4/98

### **NGO Generates Income and Provides Job Skill Training for Members**

Since 1992, the Karakalpak Society for Disabled has operated a Vocational School to address the lack of marketable skills among members. Employers are often unwilling to hire the disabled, and state-of-the-art skills help overcome this barrier. With training and grant support from Counterpart and other donors, the NGO established a six-work station training center and has trained more than 600 members in computer skills. As a result, almost 25% of them have found employment. Building on this success, the school now offers in-home training for disabled children and sells baked goods as a means of revenue generation. Q 4/98

### **Civics Education Students Win Court Order Preventing Forced Cotton Picking**

The Russian Cultural Center (RCC) of Chirchik, a Counterpart grantee and active participant in a range of NGO support programs, has expanded the use of its program of civic/human rights education to five high schools, 26 day schools and 13 boarding schools across their region, working in close collaboration with the Tashkent Region Department of Public Education. With the support of the RCC, a group of students used their new belief in the power of their fundamental rights and understanding of the legal system in their country. The student group lodged a formal protest against the common practice of enforced labor during annual cotton harvest through proper channels learned through RCC training programs. The district court ruled in their favor and the mayor was forced to cancel his order to send the children to collective farms.

For more than 50 years, students, teachers and rural residents have been forced to leave school and pick cotton in a highly propagandized "campaign" that plays a significant role in national identity and the economy of the entire region. Documented human rights abuses during these campaigns include physical violence, very poor living conditions and exposure to high levels of pesticide. The long gap in schooling had a negative affect on the quality of education in rural areas. This practice has received international attention, but one of the first successful efforts to challenge the system was accomplished through NGO efforts. Q 4/98



**Parent Network Partnership Fosters Regional Coalition**

The KRIDI Club, a network of parents with disabled children, is partnered with the National Parent Network on Disabilities from the US with support and a recent partnership grant from Counterpart. They invited similar parent networks from all five Republics to attend a recent training workshop organized in Uzbekistan with their US partners. The workshop focused on introducing the basic principles of parent-to-parent support, policy advocacy and education integration. As a result of KRIDIs willingness to share resources and information, NGOs from across the region developed a strong connection and made plans to formalize collaboration with a number of specific partnerships and a regional coalition. Q 4/98

**NGO Advocates for Health Education Reform**

The Center for Health Education in Nukus designed an integrated health education curriculum for use in high schools, but did not know how to advocate for its introduction into the official curriculum. With consultation from Counterpart staff, the NGO developed an advocacy strategy for approaching local officials. As a result, the program received approval from the Ministry of Health. After some collaborative fine-tuning, the program will provide more than 1,000 students an improved understanding of the fundamentals of health preservation in the ecologically damaged Aral Sea area. Q 4/98

**Advocating for Individual Member Rights Strengthens Disability Rights Organization**

On-going efforts to advocate for individual member rights is dramatically increasing visibility and member involvement for Counterpart grantee Matonat Society for the Disabled. They have recently helped members of the disabled community gain the rights to reduced-price medication, telephone service, child benefits, employment, medical services and other entitlements. Q3/98

**Upgrading Teacher's Skills and Increasing Workforce Marketability**

Children and Parents NGO provides a number of services to improve education in Uzbekistan. In addition to publishing a newspaper for teenagers, they were awarded a Counterpart Consortium support grant to combat the drop in living standards among teachers resulting from overall economic decline, RIFs and low salaries. Adapting methodology learned through participation in Counterpart training workshops, they have already trained more than 300 teachers in participatory methodology and interactive teaching techniques. The training included development of new skills in marketing and job search techniques. After only 2 months, 15% of the trainees have already found higher paying employment in a variety of primary and secondary jobs, including in some of Tashkent's private schools. Q3/98

**Engaging Law Enforcement Officials in Dialogue about Domestic Violence Taboos**

The Perzent Center for Reproductive Health in Nukus held a highly successful seminar on practical techniques for combating domestic violence with support from Counterpart Consortium and USIS. Although it is too early to determine the full impact of this event, the active participation of representatives from the policy departments of 17 districts is a strong indicator of success in itself. Domestic violence is a very sensitive subject in Uzbekistan and official law enforcement bodies are seldom supportive or at all responsive to discussion of new approaches. Q3/98

**Successful Advocacy for Disabled Access to Public Buildings**

The Karakalpak Society of the Disabled has achieved a great victory for the disabled community in this isolated and conservative region of Uzbekistan. A long time beneficiary of Counterpart NGO support programs, members gained renewed impetus through participation in Counterpart Consortium's first Advocacy Training Workshop held in Karakalpakstan. The Vocation School of the Karakalpak Society of the Disabled has reached an agreement with the government that no new public building may be built without the Vocation School's "disabled access" stamp of approval. This is the first successful effort of this kind in Central Asia. Q3/98

### **Karakalpakstan NGO Coalition Lobbies for Representation on National Drafting Committee**

NGOs in Karakalpakstan perceive that their needs were not being effectively represented by the National Center for Human Rights, which is the official government sanctioned representative in many NGO matters in Uzbekistan. They wanted representation on the working group for NGO legislation and developed an advocacy to win a seat on the committee. With assistance requested from Counterpart's Nukus NGO Support Center, The Karakalpak NGO Coalition adopted a resolution deploring their non-inclusion in the working group on NGO legislation. The executed a letter writing campaign to key government officials and followed up with a series of meetings. As a result, the Director of the Center consented to the addition of at least one representative from Karakalpakstan in the working group. Q3/98

### **New Women's NGO Coalition Goal to Avoid Duplication in Reproductive Health Programs**

Women's NGOs in Uzbekistan have traditionally been unable to sustain collaborative efforts, succumbing to continued competitiveness and rivalry. A number of successful women's reproductive rights activities have not been effectively coordinated, thus diminishing the potential impact of valuable efforts. With support and services provided through Counterpart's Tashkent Information Center (co-funded by UNHCR), the Center for Women-Leaders (CWL), a Counterpart grantee, has formed a partnership with the International Federation for Family Planning to develop a strategic plan for future activities and collaboration. With the increased credibility provided by the partnership, CWL held a seminar for 15 NGOs with similar missions, resulting in the formation of an informal coordinating group to avoid duplication and share information about the portion of their activities directly related to reproductive health programs. A seminar for journalists was held at the conclusion of the seminar to publicize the new initiative and the availability of sources of information and support for reproductive health issues in Uzbekistan. Q3/98

### **Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in the Fergana Valley**

The Kokand Branch of the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan (BWA) has been an active participant in the full range of Counterpart Consortium activities since 1995. In collaboration with Counterpart contract trainers and the Kokand Counterpart NGO Support Center, BWA developed and conducted two tailored training seminars aimed at alleviating the problem of unemployment among rural women in the oblast. Of the 80 women who attended the seminars, entitled "Training Rural Women Entrepreneurs" and "Women and Society," respectively, 46 have now opened their own small enterprises. Q2/98

### **Developing Member Support for a New Judges Association**

With financing provided by USAID contractor the American Bar Association, the newly-formed Association of Judges of Uzbekistan (AJU) held an international seminar for judges from the US, Austria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Counterpart collaborated by providing a specially designed training workshop on Association Building with a special emphasis on fundraising and financial sustainability. As a result of the overall success of this initial event, AJU has developed an on-going, year-long training program to provide 25 seminars for 700 members of AJU to develop member understanding of association concepts. Q2/98

### **An International Treaty's Affect on Individual Citizen's Intellectual Property Rights**

Although Uzbekistan is a signatory of the World Organization for Intellectual Property Declarations and the Bern Convention, no results-oriented implementation measures had been initiated. With a grant from Counterpart Consortium, The Targibot Center for Copyrights is providing training and consultation services to artists, filmmakers and other creative groups to help them understand their rights and how to exercise them. As a result, a new association - - the "Mussafo ekran" Association of Film Industries - - has been registered in Uzbekistan. In addition, the Uzbekistan Republican Association for Authors' Rights has noted that since the project began, the rate of registration for works of intellectual property has risen by 300%. Q2/98

**Association Reduces Child Mortality Rates and Mobilizes Physicians for Public Health Advocacy**

The Pediatricians Association of Bukhara Oblast, recipients of two Counterpart NGO Support Grants, has documented a dramatic increase in the incidence of severe diarrhea in the region. Extreme dehydration resulting from lack of treatment is the major contributor to a 23/1000 death rate among children. Realizing that many mothers and physicians were unaware of the extent of the problem, as well as of modern techniques for its treatment, the Association developed a training course benefiting 115 doctors throughout the Oblast. As a result of their training and a resultant public information campaign, child mortality rates caused by diarrhea dropped to 7%, and other official and non-governmental organizations are now applying the methodology developed by the Association. Q4/97

**Grassroots Activism Removes Un-Cooperative Local Official from Office**

Following a regional seminar in Fergana (jointly sponsored by Counterpart/Global Training for Development/USAID/ABA) concerning legal regulation of NGOs, several local NGOs advocated for the removal of the Deputy Khokkim, whom they considered a hindrance in their attempts to carry out socially beneficial activities. Their efforts were rewarded: a higher level official, who participated in the seminar, replaced the difficult Deputy Khokkim and has since been receptive to collaboration with NGOs and supportive of their initiatives. Q4/97

**Local Government Contributes \$20,000 to Local Artisan Center Project**

The Artisans' Center of Gizhduvan is an active participant in a range of Counterpart Consortium activities and a strong Aid to Artisan's partner. They leveraged increased visibility resulting from a personal visit from Hilary Clinton to win a grant of \$20,000 from the mayor to support construction of a "crafts-tourist" center on the Samarkand-Bukhara highway, a busy route traveled by many motorists. Q4/97

**NGO Coalition Efforts to Provide Legal Education Revived in Uzbekistan**

Counterpart Consortium reached 141 NGO representatives and a broad cross-section of government officials during the 5-city seminar cycle on legal regulation. As a result of these meetings, an inactive NGO Working Group has been reactivated with increased interest from government officials. Agreement was also reached about the need to hold a final seminar in Tashkent and to draft an entirely new NGO law, with the participation of NGOs, government officials and international consultants. Q4/97

**Creative Strategic Planning Gains Access to Government Statistical Information**

The Matonat Society for the Disabled, recipients of a grant from Counterpart Consortium in December, has been repeatedly denied access to the database on disabled persons of Uzbekistan, maintained by the "Ftech" governmental agency. After consultations with Counterpart staff, advocacy training and access to the lessons learned by other NGOs through Counterpart organized networking opportunities, Matonat presented a new, partner-oriented proposal to Ftech for mutually beneficial, collaborative efforts. As a result, they were granted use of the database, thereby opening a marvelous opportunity for expansion of the membership/client base, using its information on more than 1, 000 disabled persons in Tashkent alone. In the long term, the fledgling relationship between an NGO and a government agency will provide other, far-reaching impacts for the entire disabled community in Uzbekistan. Q4/97

**Fergana Valley NGO Established Working Relationship with Mahalla Committee**

The Association for an Ecologically Clean Fergana was denied permission to conduct a public forum (funded by a Consortium grant) by a local deputy mayor. Using skills and confidence gained through participation in a number of Counterpart training programs, the NGO gained the necessary official support through another channel. By working directly at the grassroots level through the existing *makhalla* committees, the uncooperative local official was cut out of the process and more people were involved in the event. Q4/97

### **Service Provision Increases Financial Sustainability of Professional Association**

Lack of access to information and communication resources continues to be a constraint for NGOs and Associations. To address this problem, the Association of Accountants and Auditors has opened a library as a member service, using revenue generated by its 4000 dues-paying members to provide materials on economics, accounting, auditing and other issues of interest to membership. In addition, the Association continues to demonstrate its commitment to the development of the NGO sector as a whole by establishing a print center, providing printing services at a fraction above costs. This service contributes to the Association's financial sustainability and that of other Uzbekistani NGOs. Q4/97

### **Center for Women-Leaders and the National Center for Human Rights:**

Center for Women-Leaders and the National Center for Human Rights, both Counterpart grantees, recently held a seminar on women's rights as human rights. The audience was made up entirely of professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.) who – according to a newspaper article – were quite oblivious to the existence of the issue, despite their education. The article included a quote from Coordinator Gulnoz Khidoyatova, attributing much of their success to the fact that CWL has received “systematic support” from Counterpart. Q3/97

### **Junior Achievement of Uzbekistan**

Junior Achievement Uzbekistan held a regional Teacher Training Session from August 25- 29. Since an additional 25 teachers were trained in the JA Applied Economics program, the NGO will increase its outreach by an estimated further 750 students. JA Uzbekistan is a two-time Counterpart grant recipient. Q3/97

### **Uzbekistan NET/GTD Graduates Forming Network**

A network of returned NET/GTD Delegates provides support for the entire NGO community in Uzbekistan. One delegate, Nella Kort from Computers and Internet, is providing free internet to two other returned delegates and is working with a third to conduct a seminar on email and internet for 12 members of the Karakalpakstan Business Women's Association. Another delegate, Bahadir Samadov from Junior Achievement, has provided assistance to a number of delegates in completing documentation required for NGO registration. Q3/97

## **CONSTITUENCY BUILDING THROUGH THE MEDIA**

### **NGO Membership in High Level Agricultural Planning Commission in Uzbekistan**

The agriculture sector in Karakalpakstan is weak, but critical to economic development in the region. Counterpart grantee Farmers' Resource Center has gained public and official recognition for its successful work to help farmers understand their legal rights and improve their skills. As a result of this success, the State-organized Association of Farmers of Uzbekistan invited the Executive Director of the Center to participate in weekly conference calls to discuss strategies for supporting agriculture. The Center is the only NGO representative at the meeting, which includes the Minister of Agriculture, heads of state farms, city government officials, and the Cabinet of Ministers. The Farmers' Resource Center now has an excellent venue to advocate for its constituents and influence public policy through collaboration and cooperation. Q 3/99

### **NGO Facilitates Televised Parliamentary Candidate Debates in Kazakhstan**

Members of the Association of Independent Mass Media (ANESMI) - a Counterpart grantee, target and active participant in Counterpart training workshops - used Counterpart TV debate training materials as a model in organizing the second TV debates in Kazakhstan for representatives of nine political parties running for Parliament. Opinion polls conducted after the conclusion of 1999 Parliamentary elections indicate that this particular TV debate had the most influence on public opinions and helped the electorate to make their choice during the elections.

Since 1997, Counterpart has worked with ANESMI, the Central Elections Committee and a number of international organizations to strengthen media, public and NGO involvement in election processes. The first candidate debates to be broadcast nationwide in Kazakhstan were held with Counterpart assistance in 1997. Material from initial training sessions and the 1997 broadcast debate were developed into a training video, that was also used in AED training on broadcast debates held in 1998 for participants from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Additional copies of the video training materials have been distributed to ANESMI and other NGO and Broadcast organizations throughout Central Asia. Q 3/99

### **Media Coverage Strengthens Awareness and Respect for NGOs in Central Asia**

Very few people in the general public, and especially government of Central Asia know what NGOs are and how they can by themselves or with other sectors solve problems of society. Constituency building programs throughout the five Central Asian Countries have helped to increase the awareness of the general public and specific sectors through Regional Television programs, coverage of NGO successes and issues as well as special events. As a result:

- Two Artisan NGOs in Almaty and one in Bukhara recently have gained the attention of influential people and government officials. They attribute this success to the extensive coverage in the media of NGO issues and events surrounding their organizations.
- Sheber Aul NGO, which has been in the media a total of 43 times in 8 months was recently invited to a meeting organized by Regional government to discuss how they can cooperate on local issues.
- Center Bahyt, a recently organized NGO has also been receiving more cooperation from the government since their involvement with the media in publicizing the semi-annual Regional craft fair in Almaty last November. The CB unit designed to publicity coverage for the event and trained local NGOs to carry out this publicity after the initial event.
- Matluba Bazarova, Director of the Bukhara Artisan Center was named as a Woman of the Year in Uzbekistan. The main reasons, according to the selection committee, were because of the publications and video materials about her and her organization. She presented this mass media material to the judging committee. Q 2/99

### **Creating a better Informed Public Concerning Election Issues**

In Kyrgyzstan, some of the general public was not well informed about the Election Law. Some NGO representatives felt that the election code should be changed. Others just didn't understand it. The NGO coalition for Democracy and Civil Society teamed up to try to give a forum to people who wanted change and to provide NGOs and the broader public with information about the Election code. They decided to conduct a dispute club or discussion forum inviting deputies of the Legislative Assembly, Election Code team members, representatives of the Central Election Committee, International Organizations, NGOs, students, independent observers and the media. The results were that NGOs were given the opportunity to express their ideas, opinions and suggestion on election legislation. NGOs showed that they are a serious power and capable of generating ideas and initiative in the society. The event was well covered by the media resulting in 4 newspaper articles, 5 radio news reports, one 30-minute broadcast and 10 TV reports. This reporting helped to inform the public about the election law and the fact that NGOs are interested in Elections. Q 2/99

### **NGO Leads Youth Awareness of Elections in Kyrgyzstan**

Kyrgyzstan is facing the upcoming presidential and parliamentary election. Although the new Election Code was approved by the Parliament it is still new for the general public. In order to mobilize direct involvement of young people as both voters and observers, the Center for Study and Support of Election Systems "Polis" designed a project for promoting electorate education on TV, supported by a grant from Counterpart. 2000 students participated in televised game shows that mobilized youth activists and educated a much broader portion of the population, who watched the programs. The Kyrgyz Central Election Committee acknowledged the importance of the NGOs activities. The 2000 students have demonstrated their capability and knowledge of new regulations and are now ready to act as independent observers and even as members of election committees if necessary. Q 2/99

### **Journalist Association in Tajikistan**

A year ago, Journalists in Tajikistan were not very knowledgeable about NGOs. In less than a year, they have grown in both knowledge and interest through the efforts of the CB coordinator and participation of two journalists in the Regional Social Partnership Conference in Issyk-Kul last September. In May this year the Tajik Association of Journalists for Social Partnership (AFSP) became the first such association in Central Asia to be registered by the Ministry of Justice. They created an advisory board representing all sectors of society in Tajikistan: Government, Business, NGOs and Media. During the first 6 months of this year the Association has conducted 2 workshops, 3 roundtables, a nationwide conference, a press conference and formed an additional chapter of AJSP in Khojand. They are currently running two competitions for journalists this year in order to increase the quantity and quality of media productions on Social Partnership. They not only address journalists in their events, but have become the leading organizers of the Social Partnership movement throughout the sectors of Tajikistan. Their efforts have garnered a request from the Oblast Akim to conduct a seminar in Social Partnership for the Journalists of Kurgon -Teppa. Q 2/99

### **Broadcast Coverage of NGOs in Uzbekistan**

During nearly 20 months of working with the media in Uzbekistan, radio and television coverage of NGO issues and activities has been at a bare minimum, with an average of one TV program and 1.2 radio programs per month. During this past quarter, we have split the CB position to one half-time broadcast specialist and one half-time print media specialist. The broadcast specialist met regularly with broadcasters in Tashkent and the CB staff conducted a workshop on NGO and community, which was tailored to journalists' knowledge and interests. These two main activities generated 10 TV programs and 12 Radio programs for the month of June. Q 2/99

### **Regional Association of Journalists for Social Partnership Sustains Momentum Generated at Counterpart Conference**

Until attending Counterpart's Regional Social Partnership Conference in September 1998, Central Asian journalists were virtually unaware of the concept, or of NGO activities in general.. At the conference, two journalists from each country wrote and signed a charter establishing the Regional Association for Social Partnership to promote the important role of NGOs in a civil society through increased media coverage. More than 50 journalists in five countries are participating in the country associations and preparing articles and programs for the media, generating 119 media pieces (71 newspaper articles, 20 radio spots and 29 television programs) during the first quarter of 1999 alone.

Following are highlights of additional results documented since the establishment of the Association:

- Journalists in all five Central Asian Republics have established national associations.
- The Turkmenistan association opened an office in January 1999 with Counterpart grant funding.
- The Tajikistan association conducted a national Social Partnership Conference in March 1999, also with grant funding from Counterpart.
- Associations in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are also developing project proposals with Counterpart proposal development consultation. Q 1/99

### **Journalists in Kazakhstan Increase Media Coverage of Health Issues**

Media coverage of health issues in Kazakhstan has been limited in the past. Counterpart and Abt Associates collaborated to increase journalist interest in covering health issues in a six month campaign including training, follow-up information bulletins and a contest for the best published media piece. Following are impacts documented from this campaign:

- One newspaper journalist initiated, developed and produced a continuing twice-monthly health supplement for her newspaper. Fifteen issues had been developed so far.
- One journalist wrote 16 health articles and another produced 12 TV programs. 92% of participating journalists produced two or more media pieces during the first campaign.
- All journalists surveyed said that they would participate in future campaigns.
- An average of 26 newspaper articles and 24 TV programs were produced each month of the campaign in addition to the airing of Abt produced videos nearly 90 times. Q 1/99

### **Efforts to Engage Journalists in Tajikistan Increase NGO Visibility**

Six months ago, eight out of ten journalists in Tajikistan didn't know what NGOs were and what they were doing to develop the civil society of the country. A series of activities designed to address this problem, including a number of innovative discussion forums and other technical assistance activities have dramatically strengthened NGO-journalist collaboration. 7 journalists are now active members of local NGOs, producing newsletters and increased media coverage. Two journalists associations are conducting a range of activities resulting in increased awareness and interest in NGOs, including:

- Conduct of three seminars on Social Partnership for Tajiki journalists;
- Development of a 20 hour course on NGOs for Journalism Undergraduates;
- Development of a three regular TV programs focusing on NGO activities, with cooperation of Internews for studio time and distribution;
- The inclusion of journalists in weekly OSCE meetings to plan for upcoming elections. Q 1/99

### **Journalists Form Regional Association for Social Partnership**

To varying degrees throughout the region, journalists and media organizations face serious pressure inhibiting un-biased reporting of democratic initiatives in society. Previous attempts to foster collaboration among journalists in order to strengthen this sector have been constrained due to reluctance among journalists to collaborate. As a direct result of excitement generated by Counterpart Consortium's recent Social Partnership Conference, journalist delegates formed an association to foster increased media attention on the importance of social partnerships and the role that NGOs are already playing in the movement. Not only will the association deliver future results in increased public awareness, but is an important grassroots effort to organize on the part of Central Asian journalists. Q3/98

### **Public Awareness Campaign Influences Corporate and Government Policy**

Kyrgyzstan experiences severe and on-going electricity shortages that exacerbate a number of on-going economic and social problems. There has been very little dialogue involving NGOs and citizens to develop solutions or even to identify components of the problem. The Consumer Rights Association of Kyrgyzstan (CRA) has been working with the Counterpart Consortium Constituency Building Division and another USAID contractor to develop and produce a comprehensive media campaign to involve citizens in solving this problem. CRA has gained greatly strengthened media skills as a result and has already demonstrated the following impacts:

- As a result of the resulting gain in stature of CRA and its target issue, CRA has been able to convince the National Energy Commission to send a representative to their meetings about the electricity shortage for the first time
- CRA documented a large number of individual consumer complaints that small appliances were being damaged due to frequent brownouts. When brought to the attention of local power providers, they set up a free repair program for affected consumers. Q 3/98

### **National Housing Association Established Press Office to Increase Public Awareness through Media**

Housing Associations in Kazakhstan continue to lack skill in influencing public opinion and attracting a broader constituency through media. In collaboration with the Counterpart Consortium's Constituency Building Division the National Housing Association has launched a comprehensive campaign to improve public awareness of housing issues and the role of housing associations. Due to the demonstrable results generated by the Housing Issues Awareness Campaign, the National Housing Association has opened its own press office to localize and broaden on-going efforts and to provide stronger media outreach service. With a comprehensive package of support from Counterpart Consortium, this Association has strengthened its internal capacity, is mobilizing citizen involvement in housing issues and gaining greater respect among government officials. Q3/98

### **Call-In Radio Programs Offer New Approach for NGOs to Involve and Educate the Public**

Private Housing Associations and Counterpart Consortium's Constituency Building Division partnered to produce a one-hour talk show on National Kazakh Radio (NKR) to discuss housing issues in both Kazakh and Russian languages in June 1998. Due to the high volume of call-ins in both languages, NKR scheduled additional one-hour shows on the same subject two days later. Modeled after this successful collaboration between NGOs, Counterpart Consortium and the media, the Center for Healthy Lifestyles replicated the approach focusing on disease prevention in conjunction with USAID's Healthy Lifestyle Campaign. As a result, NGOs and NKR have begun discussions about production of a regularly scheduled program to allow greater direct citizen input into problems, new ideas and NGO activities. NGOs are now able to generate support and direct involvement from a constituency of over seven million listeners throughout Kazakhstan. Q3/98



## Aid To Artisans Impact Highlights

### REGIONAL

Representatives of five ATA partner NGOs in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan as well as several Uzbekistan ATA LEAD Project NGO members participated together in a training on safe and effective use of natural dyes, conducted by ATA consultant Michele Wipplinger and her colleague Arni Litt, with the Turkmen Handicraft Center in Ashgabat. As a result of the training, Turkmen women are now able to safely use dyes and are aware of the health hazards associated with chemical dyes. Providing such health and work safety information is an example of a valuable service that the craft group is providing to its members as well as to the larger community. In addition, the training was so sought after by artisans, that several artisans traveled great distances at their own expense to attend the training. The high demand for such information also demonstrates that the NGO is listening to artisan needs and requests and working with ATA to deliver the requested information to its members. Q 2/99

ATA partner NGOs have learned that strengthening their training skills is an important aspect of building institutional capacity and several NGOs now plan to offer fee-based training as a means to earn NGO revenue. For example, Ms. Kalipa Asanakunova, a member of ATA's Kyrgyz partner NGO Talent Support Fund, recently conducted several training workshops for the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan and the Turkmen Handicraft Center. In April, Ms. Asanakunova worked with ATA natural dye consultants in order to strengthen her knowledge and skills in that field, and Uzbek partner NGO Meros Handicraft Center is now interested in offering a natural dye training for its members, using Ms. Asanakunova as the trainer. TSF Co-Director Dinara Chochunbaeva has also trained the Turkmen Handicraft Center on craft NGO functions, structures, and by-laws, and Ms. Maya Aminova of Coordination Center Women's Initiative in Tajikistan has delivered several trainings in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. These examples demonstrate the ability of ATA partner NGOs to successfully and competently conduct training seminars, a valuable fee-based service contributing to the NGOs' financial sustainability. Q 2/99

The creation of the new regional association of craft NGOs in Central Asia is a true democracy success story. Artisan representatives of twelve Aid to Artisans partner craft groups formed an association and are in the final stages of formal registration as a Public Fund, under the laws of Kyrgyzstan. The artisans themselves conceived the idea for the association, proceeded with discussions among themselves, organized the regional meetings in which they discussed the issues, chose the officers, engaged an attorney to assist with developing the legal structure and completing formalities, and chose the appropriate legal form after careful and deliberate evaluation of the options. They chose to register as a Public Fund because it allowed membership for the Turkmen craft groups, which are not yet officially registered as NGOs in Turkmenistan, and the artisans felt strongly that they wanted this association to represent their colleagues in all five republics. They selected the Public Fund structure with the understanding by the members that the association would change its juridical status once the representative groups from Turkmenistan attain official registration in their republic. While ATA fostered the regional relationships among artisans of the five republics, and encouraged them to work together and look to each other as peers and professional colleagues with valuable knowledge and experience to share, and while ATA and Counterpart worked together to provide training in team-building and how to create and build an association, it was in fact the artisans who during the process voiced the idea to create an association, and who then acted together on that idea. Q 2/99

In late May, thirty representatives from the five Central Asian republics participated in the fourth meeting of the regional association, held in Almaty. They discussed plans for the future of the association and member organizations within each country. Kazakhstan partner NGO Sheber Aul hosted the representatives for dinner at the teahouse in the new Sheber Aul Artisan Center. Charter association member Ms. Dinara Chochunbaeva, Co-Director of Talent Support Fund in Kyrgyzstan, said: "ATA has made it possible for the artisans to form a regional association. By building the preliminary base and infrastructure, by creating the links between craft organizations, by showing us relationships with outside organizations like PEOPLink, buyers, and other groups, by bringing us together from the different republics for trainings and fairs, ATA has made the opportunity for us to create an association in the region, and to open the path for us to work together in the future without ATA." Q 2/99

As a means of continuing regional links between ATA's partner NGOs after the close of ATA's project in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan partner NGO Talent Support Fund took over ATA's regional newsletter in February, preparing an edition for distribution at the regional craft association meeting held in Bishkek in early March. In Uzbekistan, the Bukhara Artisan Center and Meros Center of Samarkand continued to develop and distribute monthly newsletters to their members after participating in Counterpart's newsletter training in December. Q 1/99

Central Asian products shown at the February 1999 New York International Gift Fair generated more than \$13,800 in wholesale orders for ATA partner NGOs Talent Support Fund of Kyrgyzstan, Coordination Center Women's Initiative of Tajikistan, and the Handicraft Center of Turkmenistan. Orders written at the show are being distributed by NGOs to rural women in Kyrgyzstan, women living in the conflict zones of Tajikistan, and women in Turkmenistan, providing them with a much-needed source of income. Products from these NGOs were also shown in an ATA booth at a trade show in Frankfurt, Germany at the end of February where additional orders were written. Q 1/99

Following ATA and Counterpart Consortium training on associations, and ATA's long-standing efforts at building professional relationships between its partner NGOs in the region, representatives of the partner NGOs in the five Central Asia republics held a meeting in Samarkand in mid-January to create a regional association of craft NGOs. The NGOs themselves had the idea for the Samarkand meeting, and all planning and organization was done by the artisans without assistance from ATA. At the meeting, the representatives wrote a charter and by-laws, decided to base the regional association in Kyrgyzstan, charged Dinara Chochunbaeva (Talent Support Fund) and Matluba Bazarova (Bukhara Artisans Center) to develop a code of ethics, and selected Ms. Chochunbaeva, Co-Director of ATA partner Talent Support Fund, to spearhead the association registration process. Ms. Chochunbaeva began registration procedures in Bishkek during the month. Q 1/99

Leaders of ATA's partner NGOs throughout Central Asia have begun talking among themselves about the need for creation of a regional craft association. At the July 27 advocacy meeting in Uzbekistan, members of Bukhara Artisan Center, Kokand Artisan Center, and Khiva Artisan Center agreed to establish a Coordinating Council of Craft NGOs in Uzbekistan, including the Meros Center of Samarkand. This Council is an important first step toward the creation of a regional association. Q 3/98

Kyrgyz NGO Talent Support Fund (TSF) hosted Uzbekistan's Meros Handcraft Development Center for a special weekend exhibition and sale of Samarkand crafts at TSF's Bishkek retail shop. Four Meros members traveled to Bishkek for the event, and weekend sales at the shop exceeded \$1,100. This event not only allowed the two organizations to provide a sales opportunity as a service to their members, including those belonging to vulnerable groups, but also strengthened their working relationship as NGOs. Q2/98

## KAZAKHSTAN

In Kazakhstan, representatives of more than 20 media agencies attended both the groundbreaking and grand opening ceremonies for the Texaco-funded Sheber Aul artisan center. The event received wide press coverage in Kazak, English, and Russian. Center Bahyt displayed improved media relations skills when it wrote a press release and invited representatives of four television companies and a newspaper to attend the opening celebration of the Center's Almaty retail outlet. Despite the fact that Center Bahyt did not pay any media representatives or journalists to cover the event (a common practice when requesting media coverage), the shop was featured both in the local paper and on television. Q3/99

In Kazakhstan, one new NGO, the Creativity Development Center, was registered with five charter members. The creation of this vibrant new NGO by Aid to Artisans Local Coordinator Ms. Ainura Ashirova is a direct result of Aid to Artisans' work in the republic. Distressed that Aid to Artisans was ending its work with artisans in Kazakhstan, Ms. Ashirova and professional colleagues started this NGO in order to continue developing the craft sector and strengthening the links between ATA's partner NGOs around the region. Q 2/99

Mr. Bruce Grover, Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to ATA partner NGO Sheber Aul, has noticed a dramatic change in the NGO's governance and community activism over the last year. He comments: "A year ago when I came to the Sheber Aul village and NGO, a Board of Directors meeting consisted of the Peace Corps Volunteer (me), a translator, and one or two Board members. Today Board meetings are regularly attended by not only the five members of the Board, but also by six to ten members of the community, and lively discussion takes place on meaningful village and NGO concerns. I believe this is because with ATA's assistance they have finally seen a promise fulfilled in the construction of the new Sheber Aul Artisan Center." Q 2/99

Aid to Artisans worked with Sheber Aul to organize a grand opening ceremony which was held in late May to dedicate the new Sheber Aul Artisan Center, as part of the ATA designed and orchestrated social partnership involving Texaco International, ATA, Counterpart Consortium, USAID, US Peace Corps, Tore Construction Company, Sheber Aul NGO, and the Government of Kazakhstan. The US Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Richard Jones, spoke at the ceremony, as did Mr. Zamanbek Nurkadilov, Governor of the Almaty Region, and Mr. Edward Verona, Managing Director of Texaco in Kazakhstan. The event was well attended by dignitaries from the US and Kazakhstan governments, representatives of USAID, Peace Corps, international and local NGOs, the press, and residents of the Sheber Aul village. Of note in this social partnership was the addition of Tore Construction Company, a local firm which not only won the competitive bid to construct the artisan center housing workshops, a teahouse, and a retail shop, but then contributed windows, doors, substantial labor and overhead to the project in the spirit of assisting a local community and following Texaco's lead of good corporate citizenship. Q 2/99

In Kazakhstan, Mr. Zamanbek Nurkadilov, Governor of the Almaty Region, participated in the grand opening ceremony for the new Sheber Aul Artisan Center. In his speech, he announced that the regional government would repair the road leading to the new artisan center. Ms. Tiltash Betuova, Head of the Culture Department of the Almaty Region, and Mr. B.S. Kutpanov, Governor of Karasai Area, also attended the ceremony. The Regional Governor's participation demonstrates the positive collaborative relationship that Sheber Aul has cultivated with the local and regional government. Q 2/99

Partner NGO Sheber Aul (Kazakhstan) recently decided to add a Board of Directors to its management structure, as a result of efforts by Peace Corps Volunteer Bruce Grover, and ongoing dialog with Aid to Artisans' Local Coordinator and Regional Director. The Board consists of three members from the NGO, a manager, and the NGO Director. This decision reflects increased involvement of Sheber Aul's general membership in the organizations' activities and decisions, and a greater feeling of cohesion within the group. Sheber Aul also added two new members in January, despite natural limitations to membership increase because of its isolated community base. Q 1/99

Center Bahyt (Kazakhstan) demonstrated improved ability in use of the media to promote its causes by writing a press release and inviting representatives of four television companies and a newspaper to attend the opening celebration. Despite the fact that Center Bahyt did not pay any media representatives or journalists to cover the event (a common practice when requesting media coverage), the shop was featured both in the local paper and on television. Q 4/98

In December, Center Bahyt, ATA's one-year-old partner NGO in Kazakhstan, opened its craft shop, "Salon Bahyt", on the property of the Almaty College of Decorative and Applied Arts. At the opening ceremony, speakers reminded visitors of the role ATA's partner NGO, the Women's League of Creative Initiative, had played in the survival of the College during a period of great financial and administrative difficulty. They also noted that current members of Center Bahyt created the new NGO after witnessing the success the Women's League had by working together as a group. Aware of its need to develop a financial base of sustainability, Center Bahyt recently opened its craft shop to provide an urban Almaty outlet for crafts produced by members of ATA's partner throughout the region. Q 4/98

Partner NGO Sheber Aul (Kazakhstan) sought and received assistance from regional government officials in various steps related to the ATA-Texaco-Sheber Aul Artisan Village Revitalization project. In one instance, Director Rimma Nurtaeva requested expedited approval of a construction permit and a 50% reduction in the permit fee from the Regional Governor. Not to be put off by a secretary who would not allow her to wait in the office, Ms. Nurtaeva waited outside until she saw the Governor arrive, and then entered to catch his attention before she could be turned away again. Ms. Nurtaeva and the members of Sheber Aul had previously met Regional Governor Nurkadilov but renewed their acquaintance during the groundbreaking ceremony and press conference arranged with Counterpart and ATA assistance in September. Ms. Nurtaeva's actions demonstrate both growing confidence and improving skills in dealing with government officials by the members and leaders of this NGO. Q 4/98

Partner NGO Center Bahyt (Kazakhstan) encouraged members of ATA partner NGOs throughout the region to place handicrafts on consignment in the shop. Increasingly, partner NGOs throughout the five republics are working together to develop and share sales and marketing opportunities, and to view each other as colleagues rather than strictly competitors. Q 4/98

With ATA guidance, Center Bahrit, the new organization formed from faculty and students of the Almaty College of Applied and Decorative Arts, officially registered as an NGO in Almaty in May. Center Bahrit has 17 founding members. The NGO was formed as a direct result of College faculty observing ATA's work with Shiber Aul and the Women's League of Creative Initiative and the consequent successes that these two organizations have experienced. Faculty and students from the College decided that coming together as an NGO would allow them to work more freely and independently. Q2/98

NGOs organizing the regional craft fair in Almaty invited the Afghan Refugee Women's Association as well as independent artisan Pavel Marikovsky to participate in the regional craft fair in Almaty. Mr. Marikovsky is an elderly pensioner whose home is being sold and who needed to sell his petroglyph reproductions to raise money for new housing. Fair organizers waived all booth fees for Mr. Marikovsky to facilitate his participation in the fair. Q2/98

ATA partner NGOs in Kazakhstan, Shiber Aul, Women's League of Creative Initiative, and the new NGO Center Bahrit worked together to plan and coordinate the regional craft fair in Almaty in May. The fair was a huge success, with combined booth rental fees and display fixture rental fees exceeding the cost of renting the fair venue. While fixture rental fees were used to offset the cost of purchasing and constructing display fixtures, booth rental fees are being divided among the three organizing NGOs. Because fair participants are now accustomed to paying such rental fees, ATA partner NGOs are assured of the financial viability of continuing such regional craft fairs on the same scale after the end of ATA's project in Central Asia. Q2/98

## KYRGYZSTAN

Ms. Dinara Chochunbaeva, Co-Director of ATA partner NGO Talent Support Fund (Kyrgyzstan), traveled to Ashgabat in January to conduct training and consultations for ATA partner craft group, the Handicraft Center of Turkmenistan. Ms. Chochunbaeva shared her knowledge and experience in starting several successful NGOs in Kyrgyzstan with the leaders and members of the Handicraft Center of Turkmenistan. As a result of her training and consultations, members of the Center wrote their group charter with a clearer understanding of craft NGOs, their function, and structure, and considerations in registering an NGO. Q 1/99

Talent Support Fund (Kyrgyzstan) NGO member Kalipa Asanakunova was hired to serve as an assistant product designer and to conduct seminars for the Businesswomen's Association of Uzbekistan for the ATA/Counterpart LEAD microenterprise project. Ms. Asanakunova's ability to deliver such training is a direct result of ATA's work with TSF in building their capacity in the areas of product design and development. With funding from UNDP, TSF also published a full-color product catalog, which will allow TSF to more effectively market the craft products of their members. Q 4/98

Talent Support Fund (Kyrgyzstan) Co-Director Dinara Chochunbaeva met with an Advisor to the Minister of Labor concerning changes TSF feels are needed in technical / trades education in Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Chochunbaeva's actions demonstrate the understanding she has developed through her work with Aid to Artisans of the importance of market demand in the free-market economy, and of her strengthened ability to lobby the national government for change. As a result of Ms. Chochunbaeva promoting the need for change to a more market-driven focus in the technical training for craftspeople, the Ministry is currently considering her for the position of a National Consultant. Q 4/98

Kyrgyz NGO Talent Support Fund (TSF) added products to the collection that was developed with ATA, resulting in a very marketable product line which sold well during the recent New York International Gift Fair (NYIGF). TSF secured several large orders including a \$6300 order placed by a US-based national catalogue called Cuddledown. The TSF items will appear in the catalogue later this winter. The J.Peterman catalogue also expressed a strong interest in carrying several TSF items including felt rugs and pillows. ATA's marketing department is currently working with J.Peterman to answer questions about TSF's production capacity. NYIGF orders will provide TSF members with supplemental income for the winter months. Q 3/98

## TAJIKISTAN

Aid to Artisans' partner NGO the Coordination Center for Women's Initiative (Tajikistan) held a successful February membership drive, adding ten new members as a result of visits to village women in Kofarnihon, Varzob, and Tursun-Zade districts. During these visits, leaders of CCWI and its branches talked with the women about village women's issues, the Women's Movement, and CCWI specifically. Q 1/99

Tajik NGO Coordination Center Women's Initiative (CCWI) continues its outreach program to assist the women of Kofarnihon region, a conflict zone in the continuing civil violence in Tajikistan, including training on product quality and design and in marketing the women's handicrafts. WIC recently brought products from these women for sale to the regional craft fair in Almaty and the Kyrgyz Style craft shop in Bishkek, thus providing much needed income to women in this region. CCWI President Maya Aminova comments: "When we visit Kofarnihon region, we play the role of peace messengers. When we come to people from the region, this means that the situation got better and things are not so bad. These people are cut off from the living world and they lack information. Rumors that women from Dushanbe have come travel around the village so fast many women come to chat. We hand them informational newsletters and magazines of different NGOs. Our arrival is like a holiday for these women and it gives them inspiration and enthusiasm." Q2/98

The President of Tajikistan's Coordination Center Women's Initiative, Maya Aminova, followed up with an artisan group in Chilik, Kazakhstan on the group's progress in registering as an NGO. Ms. Aminova inspired these artisans to form an NGO after her participation last fall in Counterpart Consortium's "NGO and Community" training workshop and her on-going work with ATA. Q2/98

#### TURKMENISTAN

In the month of January alone, the Handicraft Center of Turkmenistan earned more than \$1100 through local sales of product developed with an ATA consultant in the fall of 1998. These strong sales represent significant income to Turkmen women artisans as well as substantial income to the Center to help finance their artisan-related and community outreach activities. Q 1/99

According to Gozel Annamerredova, of Turkmenistan: "Upon becoming a member of an NGO people began working together. Especially after the design workshop they are well aware of the advantages of working together. New NGO members understand very well that being a team they can solve some problems. For example, at the end of the design workshop we had a TV show where we spoke about the artisans' problems with getting crafts abroad, through Turkmen customs for sales and exhibitions. And now we have a law, which says that any artisan can get his craft anywhere if he proves that it is his product. This law is accepted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, immediately after the TV show. Just jewelry made from expensive metal is prohibited to take abroad. People know that without creating NGOs they couldn't solve this kind of problem, and without ATA's assistance they would not create any NGO." Q 4/98

In Turkmenistan, ATA's Local Coordinator wrote, "Before the New Year holiday artisans had a problem earning enough money to have a nice New Year holiday. During an NGO meeting, Peace Corps volunteer Leanne Ovalles offered her help in organizing a Christmas exhibition for international organizations such as the US Embassy, Peace Corps, the United Nations. Then we asked the Peace Corps Director to help us. She talked to those organizations and they allowed us to make a fair. Senior Liaison Officer of UNHCR Francoise Muller helped us very much to have three days fair at the UN building. Artisans had a good sale. Now they are happy to afford a nice New Year holiday. Artisans are finding ways of solving their problems." Before ATA began working in Turkmenistan, none of the artisans were organized in any sort of group. Competition between them was fierce, and they rarely made efforts to work together to solve common problems. As a result of ATA's efforts to bring artisans together in a positive way to look for a common solution to the problems many face, they have been working with each other more and more, and achieving newfound success together. Q 4/98

After working for several months in Turkmenistan, the impact of ATA's work is already apparent. As Ms. Gozel Annamerdova, leader of the Turkmen Handcraft Center, recently stated: " Because our state institutions are being closed, many young Turkmen women are no longer able to get the education they need in order to find work. Even the schools giving practical education are closing. Many other young Turkmen women are losing their jobs as government companies close and offices are cutting staff. Because of this, young Turkmen women are becoming prostitutes as a way to earn money for themselves and their families. All Turkmen women traditionally learn embroidery, sewing, carpet weaving from an early age, but in the past no one bought these products. Women traded or bartered their products with each other. Aid to Artisans has begun to open the way for these women to sell their products and to give many women an alternative to prostitution." Q 3/98

## UZBEKISTAN

In Uzbekistan, partner NGO Meros Handcraft Center was featured in a fifteen-minute television broadcast. In Kazakhstan, ATA worked closely with Counterpart Consortium Constituency Building staff to invite media and print journalists and photographers to the grand opening ceremony for the Sheber Aul Artisan Center. More than 30 journalists attended the event, resulting in coverage on every Almaty television channel the evening after the event, and in numerous newspapers. Pre-event awareness among the media was so high that a visiting journalist from the *Arizona Daily Star* visited the Sheber Aul village in advance of the event to collect information for a story for the US-based newspaper. Q 2/99

In February, Meros Center (Uzbekistan) Director Zarif Mukhtarov scheduled an appointment with the Deputy Minister of Finance in Tashkent to discuss the NGO's problem with withdrawing money from a government bank transfer to the organization. Mr. Mukhtarov's actions serve as an excellent example of the understanding and confidence which Meros members have developed for dealing with government officials in a democratic manner. Q 1/99

KRIDI, a local Uzbek NGO that provided support to the parents of disabled children, was invited to participate in the regional craft fair in Tashkent. As a result of their participation, representatives of KRIDI collected more than one hundred dollars in donations from fair visitors. Their participation supported their goal of providing life skills training and supporting income generating projects for their members. Q 4/98

In October, a member of the Bukhara Artisan Center (Uzbekistan) was approached by a local tax inspector who falsely accused him of keeping improper tax records, and then attempted to charge him a fine. However, through training provided by ATA and the Bukhara Artisan Center, the NGO member was informed about his rights as a craftsman. He showed the tax inspector a copy of the decree from President Karimov stating that all craftsmen have a five-year tax exemption. After reading the decree, the tax inspector acknowledged his error and left without collecting money from him. Craft NGO members are now familiar with their legal rights, and are no longer afraid to challenge local authorities when these rights are violated. Q 4/98

After attending Counterpart training in how to write grant proposals and working with ATA on several grant applications in the last year, the Meros Center (Uzbekistan) independently leveraged \$5000 from Philip Morris in Tashkent for the purchase of a computer, fax and copy machine. Not only has Meros learned how to find funding to support its organizational activities, but the equipment it has purchased will allow it to function more efficiently. Q 3/98

In early July Matluba Bazarova, Director of the Bukhara Artisan Center (Uzbekistan) took part in a national radio interview in which she highlighted the progress and successes of the BAC, and also brought to light the directive by the office of the Regional Hokim for the BAC to disband. As a result of the radio interview, radio journalists told BAC that if the Regional Hokim did not address the issue with the BAC, they would question the Hokim about the directive themselves. Matluba previously participated in Counterpart Consortium's training on Media and Public Outreach. Q 3/98

Following an alarming letter from the Regional Governor of the Bukhara region to the Bukhara Artisan Center (BAC) urging the members of BAC to disband and join the government-sponsored Khunarmond artisan association, members of BAC wrote a petition voicing their disagreement with the proposed disbanding and delivered it to government officials (see attachment). Thirty-five artisan members of BAC signed the petition. Although ATA offered to assist BAC in addressing this matter, the members of BAC decided to take action themselves. Q2/98

Zarif Mukhtarov, Director of the Meros Center in Samarkand, was the guest of the board of directors of the newly formed Khiva Crafts Association. The Khiva Board was interested in learning from Meros' experience as they continue to develop their NGO. Mr. Mukhtarov attended a meeting of the board of directors and was introduced to a number of the association's members. Mr. Mukhtarov's work with the Khiva Crafts Association demonstrates that newly formed craft NGOs now recognize the value and experience of established NGO craft centers and that groups from throughout the country understand the benefits of working together. Q2/98



## **CITIZEN'S NETWORK FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Farmers in Jalal-Abad and Talas Are Taking Initiative to Form Democratic PFAs**

Assisted by CNFA field staff, farmers in Ala-Buka rayon of northern Jalal-Abad oblast held an initiative meeting on establishing a private farmers association. Prior to the visit by CNFA field staff, farmers in this rayon had been supported in their activity by the PFA president of a neighboring rayon (Ak-Siy rayon). In the central portion of Jalal-Abad oblast, CNFA seminars stimulated interest among farmers in Uch-Terek and Toktogul rayons. In both rayons, after CNFA field staff conducted a seminar on policy development/advocacy and assisted participants in weighing the pros and cons of establishing an association, farmers formed initiative groups to work on a charter for a rayon farmers' association. Q2/98

CNFA's support of PFA development in Talas Oblast was disrupted this quarter by upheaval among the PFA's membership triggered by the revelation that the PFA's leadership had misappropriated funds. Encouraged by training in democratic practice that they had received from CNFA, members of the PFA forced a special general meeting of the membership to hear about the issues from the leadership firsthand. After hearing from the leadership, members proposed to vote on whether to retain the current leadership. When the vote reaffirmed the current leadership, a large percentage of the PFA's members withdrew from the organization and began work on establishing new, truly democratic farmer organizations. As disruptive as this upheaval was CNFA views it as a positive step towards the establishment of democratic civil organization in Talas, and has begun helping two groups of farmers to develop charters in order to register new farmers' associations. One of the farmer-groups is a rayon-level organization, and the other group will be formed at the oblast level. Members of both groups have attended CNFA training in the past. Q2/98

### **Representatives of PFAs Insist on Democratic Governance for the New Rural Advisory and Development Service (RADS)**

Drawing on training provided by CNFA in recent seminars on democratic governance and the roles of boards of directors and committees, PFA representatives participating in the founding meeting of RADS pressed for democratic, transparent methods to be used in forming the RADS regional (oblast) boards which will guide RADS' overall activity. Participants discussed the charter, formation of regional RADS boards, formation of the national RADS council and hiring of the General Manager. K. Tokboev and E. Sydykov, PFA leaders from CNFA's target regions of Jalal-Abad and Talas, pressed for election of RADS regional board members through a process starting at the grassroots (village) level rather than at the oblast level. The founding members agreed to Mr. Tokboev's call for NGO or international donor oversight of such elections. Further, PFA representatives insisted on a decentralized process for hiring consultants for the oblast extension service centers. The PFA representatives - supported by representatives of donor projects - convinced deputy minister Tynaev that consultants in the RADS centers at the oblast level should be nominated by the oblast boards rather than being selected by the General Manager or national RADS board.

The farmers have had to compromise on several issues reviewed by the RADS board but their outspokenness and insistence on democracy have prevented the Ministry of Agriculture from dominating the council and operating in a top-down fashion. In turn the Ministry has responded by taking steps to relieve tension between the Ministry and the farmers on the RADS board, an engage in a constructive dialogue with the farmers. Q2/98

### **Farmers and Parliamentarians Begin to Institutionalize Dialogue**

Following the policy forum, farmers from Chui and Talas oblasts held additional meetings with their members of parliament to discuss issues of concern to farmers. Both parliamentarians urged farmers to regularize meetings with their elected officials and proposed ways of working together to solve problems facing agricultural producers and rural residents. Q2/98

### **Parliamentarians Incorporate PFA Recommendations into Draft Laws**

The Agrarian Committee of the Legislative Assembly informed CNFA that it would incorporate the suggestions raised by farmers at the policy forum into the draft law on land. Committee staff subsequently reported that about half the recommendations made by farmers at the forum passed in the initial reading of the draft law. Q2/98

### **Kyrgyz Agricultural Training and Advisory Service (ATAS) Begins to Promote Farmer-Government Dialogue**

Building on the momentum of the CNFA-sponsored policy forum, ATAS gathered farmers and rural residents of the Talas and Issyk-Kul regions to prepare a set of policy recommendations for submission to representatives in both houses of parliament, the president, ministers, and oblast governors. This initiative by an indigenous Kyrgyz agency is a large step forward toward institutionalizing the link between PFAs and their elected representatives in the national parliament. Q2/98

### **Women in Jalal-Abad to Establish Associations of Women Farmers**

Having attended CNFA seminars on PFA Structure, Board of Directors/Committees, Policy Development and Advocacy, several women farmers in Ak-Siy rayon of Jalal-Abad oblast have taken steps to establish an Association of Women Farmers. A group of women in Bazar-Korgon rayon of Jalal-Abad oblast have begun work to establish an Association of Women Farmers as well. Q2/98

## **ICNL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **KAZAKHSTAN**

#### **ICNL Begins Implementing the New Tax Changes for Kazakhstan**

Through various seminars, discussions with governmental partners and presentations in parliamentary conferences, ICNL has pointed out several ambiguities in the Tax Code. One of these ambiguities is the definition of a "grant". This definition was subject to various interpretations and in some cases, grants were considered income subject to taxation. ICNL proposed a clarification to this definition that would undeniably place grants in a category distinct from income (non-profit revenue). Representatives from the Ministry of Revenue accepted this point and even went one step farther by enacting a clarification to the current definition of grant and exempted all grant money from taxation. The result of this provision could save NGOs and the donor organizations up 20% on each grant made. This is the most progressive change in NGO taxation in Central Asia and possibly the entire NIS. Q 1/00

#### **Kazakhstan Changes Registration Time Limits for NGOs**

Kazakhstan made amendments to their law "On Registration of Legal Entities". The changes directly target NGO registration (that is, the amendments are only applicable to NGOs). The first amendment shortens the deadline on the Ministry of Justice's response to registration applications. The change eliminates the requirement for registration applications to contain the list (detailed information) of the Board of Directors. The amendment states that only information on the founders is required. These changes, albeit slight, will improve the regulatory environment for NGOs. Q 1/00

#### **Kazakhstan Enacts Far Reaching Tax Benefits for NGOs**

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#### **Kazakhstan Eliminates Repressive NGO Restriction from Law**

The Administrative Violations Code severely limited the ability for NGOs to hold meetings. The provision also made it illegal for organizations to be unregistered. This restriction (provision 188-2) was applied in the previous year to persons engaged in NGO activity and resulted in several convictions. ICNL openly criticized this provision in its work with the Ministry of Justice, parliamentarians, US Embassy and consultants to the President. ICNL emphasized to the government that this provision ran contrary to international norms and potentially led to abuses. At last, this needless and arbitrary provision of the Administrative Violations Code was repealed this Summer. The removal of this provision brings Kazakhstan's NGO legislation one step closer to international standards. Q3/99

### **ICNL Participates in Public Hearing on NGO Draft Law**

The initial NGO draft law (drafted by the Senate working group) was released early June for public dissemination and discussion. This draft serves as a solid base for an NGO law. The senators (with ABA and ICNL) held a public hearing whereby NGOs were invited to Astana to give testimony to the Senate Legislative Committee on the current draft. Although the NGOs were critical of the draft, the drafters were open to their comments. These comments were reduced to written form and submitted to the drafters for further review. Q3/99

### **Clarification to Kazakhstan Tax Code Is Closer to Adoption**

Through various seminars, discussions with governmental partners and presentations in Parliamentary conferences, ICNL has pointed out several ambiguities in the current Tax Code. One of these ambiguities is the definition of a "grant". This definition is subject to various interpretations and in some cases, grants can be considered income. ICNL proposed a clarification to this definition that would place grants in a category distinct from income (non-profit revenue). That same clarification is now one step closer to adoption as it has been placed on an official list of potential amendments to the Tax Code. Parliamentary consideration is expected in November. Q3/99

### **Senate Working Group Releases Draft NGO Law for Public Discussion and Commenting Period**

For over a year, ICNL has been consistently providing material support and actively consulting Senate working group and Senate Legislative Committee drafting a new NGO law. ICNL also proposed and assisted implementing a USIS IV Program whereby the drafters and NGO representatives were sent to the US for training. After all this, an NGO draft law has been prepared and released to the public. ICNL has been assisting not only with drafting, but also moderated a broad discussion of the draft among NGOs and the public at large. ICNL currently works to insure that NGO comments will reach the drafters. It is expected that the final draft will be ready for adoption this Fall. Q 2/99

### **President Continues to Address NGO Law Reform**

ICNL has been working with consultants to the Presidential Administration in formulating approaches to NGO law reform. During the last reporting period, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, addressed the nation and specifically expressed the need for NGO law development; namely the need for less restrictive registration requirements. Since that time, the President has given another address to the nation. On March 31, 1999, he again stated his commitment to NGO law reform and the need for development of a charity law. These statements are more than words as the government and Parliament both actively are working on NGO law reform with ICNL and our NGO constituents. Q 1/99

### **Senate Working Group Drafts NGO Law**

Senate Legislative Committee formed a working group under official auspices and received the approval of the Senate Administration to begin drafting a new NGO law. ICNL has been working with the Senate working group and Legislative Committee from the initiative's beginning last August. ICNL has consistently been providing material support and actively consulting this Senate working group in their drafting efforts. A final draft will be ready for public discussion in April. Q 1/99

### **Ministry of Justice Initiates Work on Charity Draft Law and Requests ICNL Support**

ICNL Regional Director, Rich Remias met with the Minister of Justice regarding NGO law reform in Kazakhstan. The Minister requested various ICNL materials, special analyses and on-going ICNL consultations. The Minister also specifically had an interest in the international norms of NGO legislation and critique of the current legislation in Kazakhstan. The Ministry has a prime interest in NGO legislation and is currently in the process of drafting a charity law.

Pursuant to the Minister's request, ICNL brought three of its consultants to Astana in March to hold a round table with the Ministry's Institute of Legislation. The discussion revolved around the international norms of NGO legislation and the possible creation of a charity law in Kazakhstan. Currently, certain proposals are being considered and additional work is pending. Q 1/99

#### **ICNL Assists Senate Working Group with NGO Law**

ICNL is currently working with the Senate Legislative Committee of Kazakhstan in drafting this new NGO law--to be completed by mid-February. This draft will elaborate on the current "Public Associations" legislation and regulate foundations, institutions, and associations. Q 4/98

#### **ICNL Brings NGO Law Expert to Kazakhstan To Meet with Senate Working Group**

ICNL again brought its CIS Program Director, Natalia Bourjaily, to Kazakhstan in November to meet with the Senate working group to give hands-on legislative consultations to the Senators. At this point, ICNL and the working group have decided to draft an initial NGO bill by mid-February. ICNL is currently providing concentrated assistance to the Senators. Thus far, ICNL has provided consultations, translations of different laws, detailed memoranda on the organizational legal forms of NGOs, and various articles on the specific legal forms. The current schedule will produce a comprehensive law on non-governmental, non-commercial organizations to be submitted to the Parliament by June. Q 4/98

#### **ICNL Contributes to Charity Law**

Although the Kazakhstan Tax Code creates tax benefits for charitable organizations, no legislation exists that can identify any such organization. The effect is that many organizations that carryout charitable activity cannot take advantage of existing benefits. Therefore, concurrent with its work on a general NGO law (mentioned above), ICNL is assisting with the drafting of a "charity" law that will define and regulate *public benefit* organizations. While the general NGO law will regulate the organizational legal forms of NGOs, the charity law will grant a "charitable status" to those organizations that operate for the "public benefit" and carryout charitable activities. Q 4/98

#### **Five Steps to Legal Reform in Kazakhstan (Q 3/98)**

##### ***Step One--Creation of a Working Group***

The legislation in Kazakhstan is in need of rapid development. As the NGO sector is growing at a high speed, outdated organizational forms and burdensome registration requirements inhibit NGOs. To address the overall issue of legislative reform, ICNL facilitated the creation of an unofficial NGO/governmental working group. The working group includes ICNL, lawyers, NGOs and parliamentarians. Through on-going meetings, the working group had strong support of NGOs, UNDP, USAID, parliamentarians and Counterpart.

##### ***Step Two--Working Group Officially Recognized***

No law can be formed without support of the legislature. The working group, although quasi-official, could not legally initiate legislation without official auspices. ICNL Regional Director, Mr. Remias and ICNL local partner, Vadim Nee went to the new capital, Astana, and met with government and NGO representatives to discuss this issue. ICNL met with Zinyada Fedotova, Senator and Chairman of the Legislative Committee on Legal Reform. It was at this point that the Senate Legislative Committee re-formed the working group under official auspices. Thus far, the working group has the added participation of two senators and approval of the Senate Legislative Committee.

##### ***Step Three--Ensuring NGO Participation***

Balanced NGO legislation requires the proper participatory involvement. This can be difficult in an environment where NGOs are divided and scattered among regions. To address this issue and ensure nation wide NGO participation, ANNOK and ICNL have created a partnership funded by Counterpart. ANNOK (Association of Non-governmental, Non-commercial Organizations of Kazakhstan) is a national NGO

umbrella organization that has serious outreach potential. ANNOK is one member of the working group and will fund the active participation of dozens of NGOs. The partnership grant will allow ANNOK and ICNL to benefit from each other's resources and increase the role of NGOs in the drafting process. ANNOK will serve a direct link to the NGO community. ICNL on the other hand, can provide the requisite expertise and serve as facilitator of the initiative.

The plan for NGO involvement includes a series of "public meetings" around the country to discuss draft legislation. ANNOK and ICNL will then collect and analyze the various comments made by NGOs and attempt to incorporate these issues into the draft law. These regional meetings will commence sometime in October or November.

#### ***Step Four-Working Group Completes a Draft Law on Charity***

Although tax benefits exist for charitable entities in Kazakhstan, charitable organizations do not exist. The legislation of Kazakhstan presently lacks a definition of charity or a legal means for an NGO to receive charitable status. Based on this, the working group drafted a base law on charities. Present at work group meetings were NDI, ABA, Lawyers Association of Shimkent, Vadim Nee, Roman Podoprigora, ANNOK, UNDP and NGO representatives. The initial draft was finalized in July. Hopefully, with governmental and NGO support, the law will be introduced next year for parliamentary consideration.

In the meantime, the working group has sent out the draft law for expert analysis to several organizations and institutes for support. Since that time two have come back: one from the General Prosecutor's Office of Kazakhstan (Institute of Legislation) and the other from the Institute of Economic Research. Both analyses generally promote the draft and recommend its consideration.

#### ***Step Five--Recognizing this NGO law Initiative at the Highest of Levels***

One problem for the NGO community in Kazakhstan is the lack of recognition at the higher levels of government. ICNL has been working with NGOs and government representatives in order to bring NGOs into the governmental forum. ICNL has partnered with ANNOK in formulating an approach to this problem, which includes a round table meeting in October in Astana. ICNL has met with senators and deputies regarding this event and has secured participation at the highest of levels. Thus far, the Speaker of the Lower House, the Speaker of the Senate, and the Minister of Justice have confirmed their direct participation. NGOs will also actively participate in this round table. ICNL and ANNOK will deliver presentations and discuss the activities of NGOs in Kazakhstan. This will also be the appropriate platform to discuss legislative reform.

### **KYRGYZSTAN**

#### **Kyrgyzstan Adopts Long Awaited NGO Law**

As detailed in previous reports, ICNL facilitated the creation of a NGO/governmental working group that has drafted a comprehensive and progressive NGO draft law in Kyrgyzstan. And in October, Kyrgyz president Askar Akaev signed the long-awaited bill on non-commercial organizations, which creates a series of provisions to alter the legal and regulatory environment for NGOs and nonprofits. Passage of the law comes after two years of collaboration between NGO lawmakers, government officials and international organizations. The new law establishes more concrete criteria for the creation of non-profit organizations, and distinguishes them clearly from commercial organizations. It also provides a clear definition of the organizational-legal forms open to NGOs (including associations, foundations and institutions). Although its effectiveness will largely depend on its implementation, the new law is one of the most progressive of its kind in the NIS. Q 4/99

### **Kyrgyzstan Parliament Approves New Law on NGOs**

During the previous year ICNL was able to bring NGOs and parliamentarians together to form one unified working group, which work resulted in drafting the NGO law. However, the final version of the law went through heated discussions between different NGOs during the last three months. With ICNL's assistance appropriate amendments to the draft were prepared by NGOs and submitted to the Parliament. These efforts brought national focus to the NGO legislation.

ICNL continued to foster the relationship between NGOs and government and continually was engaged in drafting and re-drafting this NGO law. Finally, in June, the Kyrgyzstan Parliament passed the NGO law. If implemented properly, this NGO law will be one of the most progressive laws in the entire CIS. The bill currently awaits the signature of the President, which is expected shortly. Q 2/99

### **ICNL Successfully Settles Diverging Opinions on NGO Draft Law**

Like the other CIS countries, the NGO legislation of Kyrgyzstan is far from international standards. To formulate better NGO legislation, ICNL facilitated the creation of an NGO law working group, which included NGO representatives and parliamentarians. This group has been meeting since March of last year. Two indigenous-umbrella NGOs led the nationwide public campaign to discuss the draft law. After finalizing a suitable draft that both reflects the concerns of the NGO community and complies with international standards of NGO legislation, the working group submitted the draft law on NGOs to the Legislative Committee of Parliament.

Subsequent to the draft's submission, several human rights organizations voiced concerns about the draft. Instead of constructive cooperation with the original NGO's working group, these human rights groups advocated to stop consideration of the draft and to take it off the agenda of the Parliament. There was a tense situation between NGOs leading the working group and the human rights groups. The disputes were over certain provisions, such as potential re-registration, conflict of interest, regulation of political parties, and determination of the authority of the Ministry of Justice.

ICNL assisted with establishing a dialogue between the NGOs leading the working group and the human rights NGOs. With ICNL's assistance these groups discussed and prepared sound changes to the draft law. These changes were discussed and accepted by the group of deputies assigned to work on the draft law within the Parliament. The draft law passed the first reading in Parliament and is awaiting a second reading. Q 1/99

### **ICNL Contributes Comments to Charity Draft Laws and Participates Charity Roundtable**

ICNL is currently officially analyzing a draft law on charity in Kyrgyzstan. The draft was submitted by the Kyrgyzstan Lawyers Association and will be introduced into the Kyrgyzstan Parliament in 1999. ICNL is attempting to provide comment on the draft and to make recommended changes. ICNL Regional Director participated in a round table for parliamentarians to discuss these drafts. Q 4/98

### **ICNL Contributes to Consolidation of Competing Drafts**

One problem in Kyrgyzstan was fragmented efforts at legislative reform and each group having its own proposed draft law. ICNL initially addressed this problem by combining three competing drafts to form one final version which incorporated the best from each draft. This also served to coordinate the competing efforts. However, in September, two entirely new drafts were added to the legislative process -- two new competing drafts running in opposition to the ICNL assisted draft. The Legislative Committee wanted to eliminate two of these three drafts before holding its final meeting where a final draft would be sent to the Parliament for vote.

For this objective, the Legislative Committee created a "task force" to analyze the remaining drafts. The group consists of eight deputies. This group was responsible for analyzing the competing drafts and making official recommendations to the Legislative Committee. For this, they primarily used the recent ICNL analysis of the competing draft laws. ICNL also met with the task force prior to their determination. At this meeting, the group of deputies decided that the final version of the draft was in tact and ready for submission to the Legislative Committee. The bill has since passed the scrutiny of the Legislative Committee and is now in Parliament waiting for adoption. Q 4/98

#### **Draft NGO Law in Parliament**

Like the other CIS countries, the NGO legislation of Kyrgyzstan was far from international standards. To formulate better NGO legislation, ICNL facilitated the creation of an NGO law working group that included NGO representatives and parliamentarians. This group has been meeting since March. After finalizing a suitable draft that both reflects the concerns of the NGO community and complies with international standards of NGO legislation, ICNL and the working group submitted the draft law on NGOs to the Legislative Committee of Parliament. The completion and submission of the draft symbolizes pure NGO/governmental cooperation. If the draft successfully passes the scrutiny of the Legislative Committee, it moves to the floor of Parliament for a vote. Q 3/98

#### **NGOs Form Grass-Roots Lobbying Effort**

Another hurdle for the NGO Law in Kyrgyzstan is exposure and grass roots lobbying. ICNL, NDI and its partner NGOs have been working on a lobbying strategy. The NGO coalition formulated a three-tier strategy for a lobbying effort in Kyrgyzstan. The end result has been a government coalition of support for the draft law, which involves key parliamentarians. Q 2/98

#### **ICNL Successfully Consolidates Competing NGO Draft Laws**

One problem in Kyrgyzstan was fragmented efforts at legislative reform and their coinciding draft laws. ICNL initially addressed this problem by combining three drafts to form one final version which incorporated the best from each draft. Still, there were still two remaining versions running in opposition to the ICNL assisted draft. The Legislative Committee wanted to eliminate one of the three drafts before holding its final meeting where a final draft would be sent to the Parliament for vote.

Together with local NGO partners, ICNL met with competing drafters to discuss the situation. Our partners presented them with ICNL prepared materials (analysis of the NGO draft). After discussing the drafts and their duplicative content, the drafter of one of the competing versions agreed to support the ICNL combined draft and will withdraw his draft from consideration. This moves the combined draft on NGOs one step closer to law. Q 2/98

### **TAJIKISTAN**

#### **Tajikistan Working Group Finishes First Draft of Two New Laws: A New NGO Law — "On Non-commercial Organizations" And A New Law on Charities**

The government of Tajikistan and NGO community are actively pursuing NGO law reform. However, the needed expertise on such a subject is hard to find. The government formed a quasi-governmental working group to address this issue. They, in turn, approached ICNL for assistance. In addition to its local partner, ICNL also sent consultants to Tajikistan to work directly on this draft and with the quasi-governmental working group. The group finished the first version of a new draft law, "On Non-commercial Organizations." This law meets international standards of NGO legislation and creates a progressive regime of NGO registration and regulation. The new draft law is expected to be submitted after April 1st, 2000, in the Parliament of Tajikistan. Adoption of this law will further improve Tajikistan's legislation on NGOs. Q 1/00



### **Tajikistan Adopts Part II of the Civil Code -- Expansion of the Rights and Responsibilities of NGOs**

Last March, Tajikistan adopted Part I of the new Civil Code. In that Part, ICNL was able to make proposals for the inclusion of contemporary organizational legal forms setting the base for an upcoming law on NGOs. This was a big step in terms of the overall legislative framework for NGOs in Tajikistan. Subsequently, ICNL also directly proposed provisions to Part II of the Civil Code to the official working group. The draft of Part II was finalized, submitted to Parliament and adopted in December. These new provisions give NGOs the same contractual rights and responsibilities as commercial organizations. The provisions apply to all legal entities regardless of form. This gives NGOs the recognition they deserve as independent legal entities. The end result should be that more NGOs would be contracting with businesses for the exchange of well-needed services and expertise. Q 4/99

### **Working Group Finishes First Draft of Two New Laws: A New NGO Law —"On Non-Commercial Organizations" And A New Law on Charities**

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### **Working Group Finishes First Draft of New NGO Law—On Non-commercial Organizations**

The government of Tajikistan and NGO community are actively pursuing NGO law reform. However, the needed expertise on such a subject is hard to find. The government formed a quasi-governmental working group to address this issue. In addition to its local partner, ICNL also sent consultants to Tajikistan to work directly on this draft and with the quasi-governmental working group. The group finished the first version of a new draft law, "*On Non-commercial Organizations.*" This law meets international standards of NGO legislation and creates a progressive regime of NGO registration and regulation. The new draft law is expected to be submitted after October 10<sup>th</sup> in the Parliament of Tajikistan. Adoption is anticipated in January 2000. Q3/99

### **ICNL and OSI Hold Large-Scale Conference on the New NGO Draft Law**

As all laws, the new NGO draft law was drafted by a working group in isolation. At some point, it was necessary to introduce the new draft to the NGO community and government. To accomplish this task, ICNL and OSI held a joint conference on the new bill. There, over 60 participants from government, NGOs and international organizations took part in making comments to the new draft law. These comments have been incorporated into the latest version of the draft law. Q 3/99

### **ICNL Continues Educational Seminar Series Funded by UNHCR**

ICNL has carried out three of six planned seminars in Tajikistan. The regional seminars will address current and proposed NGO legislation in Tajikistan. The seminars provide a forum for NGO representatives, international organizations and government officials to discuss the current legislation and upcoming initiatives. The seminars were temporarily postponed due to UNHCR financial constraints brought on by the crisis in Kosovo. In June 1999 the new Civil Code has been adopted by the Tajik Parliament. However, the final official text has not been available to the public yet. The new is waiting to be signed by the President of the Tajikistan. Q 2/99

### **The New Civil Code**

In June 1999, the Tajik Parliament adopted the new Civil Code. The new Civil Code allows existence of different forms of NGOs, such as public associations, foundations, and institutions. ICNL was providing assistance to the drafters. In addition, ICNL moderated a joint work on the draft Civil Code of the prominent leaders of the Tajik NGO sector together with the Ministry of Justice and other government agencies. In cooperation with Counterpart, ICNL moderated broad discussion among NGOs of the draft provisions affecting NGOs. NGOs submitted their recommendations to the drafting group and according to the drafters many of these recommendations were incorporated into the draft. The adoption of the Civil Code is extremely important step in the development of the civil legislation in Tajikistan including the NGO legislation. The final official text has not been available to the public yet. The new is waiting to be signed by the President of the Tajikistan. Q 2/99

### **ICNL Begins Work on Two New Laws**

The Minister of Justice, representatives from Parliament and representatives from the President's Administration have expressed to ICNL's local partner, Muatar Khaidarova, the desire to work on further forms of legislation including a new NGO law and a law on charities. This desire has culminated into the creation of a governmental working group, which will include ICNL as its official consultant. This working group has met five times during this period and will have an acceptable draft NGO law by August 31. A subsequent law on charity is expected to be completed by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Q 2/99

### **ICNL Continues Educational Seminar Series Funded by UNHCR**

ICNL has carried out three of six planned seminars in Tajikistan. The regional seminars will address current and proposed NGO legislation in Tajikistan. The seminars provide a forum for NGO representatives, international organizations and government officials to discuss the current legislation and upcoming initiatives. Q 1/99

### **Government Requests Further ICNL Assistance**

The Minister of Justice, representatives from Parliament and representatives from the President's Administration have expressed to ICNL's local partner, Muatar Khaidarova, the desire to work on further forms of legislation including a new NGO law and a law on charities. The President's Administration has nominated her as a consultant for these initiatives. Q 1/99

### **ICNL Assisted Law Paves Way for Further Work**

The Tajikistan government proposed a new law on public associations. Unfortunately, the adoption of this law would not have improved the current situation concerning NGOs. In fact, the enactment of yet another ineffective and ill-founded law may have worsened the already fragile situation for NGOs and the country. In response to this, ICNL and Counterpart facilitated the creation of an NGO/governmental working group to draft progressive changes to the upcoming law.

In late Spring, the Parliament of Tajikistan adopted the new law on Public Associations. This new law contains revisions that were drafted by the ICNL/Counterpart working group (described in last report). These revisions improve the law and symbolize the success of peaceful cooperation as between international organizations, government, NGOs and opposition representation. The changes reflect real, positive changes to the legislation (available from ICNL) which include the right of NGOs to engage in limited commercial activity, loosened registration requirements and better NGO/government relations.

This modest success gives ICNL the go ahead to work on subsequent legislation with the Minister of Justice and Parliament such as laws which further define various types of NGOs. Pursuant to this initial success, ICNL completed and delivered follow-up comments for the proposed Civil Code. Perhaps a week after their delivery, the Minister expressed his appreciation to ICNL for the comments and praise their quality. He, in turn, passed along the ICNL recommendations to the Civil Code working group. Q 3/98

## **TURKMENISTAN**

### **A First--Turkmen Government is Co-organizer of a Training of NGOs and Government Officials**

On March 16-17 ICNL carried out a GTD funded training of NGOs and government officials, "The Legal and Regulatory Environment for Non-Governmental Organizations" in cooperation with the National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights. While the Turkmenistan government continues to be suspicious of the NGO community, it is showing its interest in the development of the NGO sector and in the sound general NGO legislation. The training helped to initiate a dialogue between the NGOs and the government and to build better understanding by the government of the fundamental principles of NGO regulation. Q 1/99

### **ICNL Brings CIS Program Director to Turkmenistan to Meet with Chairman of Parliamentary Committee**

In November, ICNL brought its CIS Program Director, Natalia Bourjaily, and Regional Director of Central Asia, Richard Remias, to Turkmenistan to meet with governmental partners and outline future forms of cooperation. ICNL met with Vladimir Kadyrov, Chairman of the Legislative Committee and Director of the Turkmenistan Institute of Democracy and Human Rights. At this meeting, ICNL outlined a plan for continued work in Turkmenistan and discussed in detail arrangements for the March GTD funded round table for government officials. ICNL also met with Kadyrov's colleague, Mr. Egdirov, who is a consultant and has worked on many pieces of legislation. Mr. Egdirov gave ICNL a very detailed analysis of the situation in Turkmenistan regarding legislation. Q 4/98

### **ICNL Submits Amendments to Turkmenistan Civil Code**

ICNL has already contributed comments to the newly adopted Civil Code of Turkmenistan and plans to return to Turkmenistan for follow-up activities in March. Q 4/98

### **Turkmenistan Requests ICNL Comments to Proposed Civil Code**

The chances of true legislative reform in Turkmenistan were weak at best. Still, ICNL met with NGOs and officials from Parliament and Ministry of Justice to discuss the potential. Turkmenistan was in the process of writing a new Civil Code. Sections of this draft Civil Code pertain to the registration and regulation of NGOs. ICNL met with Vladimir Kadirov, Chairman of the Committee on Legislative Initiatives. Chairman Kadirov requested ICNL's comments and recommendations to those sections addressing NGOs. In July, ICNL delivered those comments to the Chairman and Parliament. The Chairman has expressed his thanks and compliments for these comments. If adopted, these recommendations would increase the legal capacity of NGOs. The final published version of the Civil Code will not be available until November. The Chairman also suggested the formation of a new NGO law within the next year whereby he requested ICNL assistance. Q 3/98

## **UZBEKISTAN**

### **ICNL Plans Training for Ministry Officials**

During the previous quarter, ICNL and Counterpart carried out a training series for NGOs and government officials in the implementation of the new NGO law. This training was funded by Global Training and Development and held in four different cities (Samarkand, Bukhara, Nukus and Kokand). Although these trainings were a success, it became abundantly clear that officials from the Ministry of Justice (being those that must implement the logistics of the new law) need special attention. The Ministry officials requested further ICNL assistance in the form of a specific training. This training will be executed by ICNL and its governmental partner, the Institute of Monitoring Legislation, and detail specific implementation issues for Ministry officials. Global has agreed to fund the tentative training for January in Tashkent. Dozens of Ministry officials will be brought in from the regions to take part in this critical training. Q 1/00

#### *Additional NGO Laws Slated by Uzbekistan Government*

Last Spring's adoption of the new law, "On Non-Commercial Organizations" was a hallmark for ICNL and the NGO sector of Uzbekistan. But additional, specific forms of legislation are still needed. In response to this need, ICNL's partner, The Institute of Monitoring Legislation, proposed that additional NGO laws be slated for the 2000-2001 legislative calendar. To this, the government responded in the positive and added the following laws for promulgation and introduction: Law on the Registration of Legal Entities; Law on Foundations and a Law on Institutions. These laws are to be completed by April and submitted for readings in Parliament. For 2001, the government is planning two more laws; Law on Unions and Associations and a Law on Charitable Activities. Work on the Tax Code may also be possible during the year. If adopted, these laws have the potential of creating a comprehensive and progressive legislative framework for NGOs. Q 1/00

#### **ICNL Continues Work on Legislative Manual on New NGO Law**

In April 1999, Uzbekistan adopted the new law regulating non-governmental, non-commercial organizations. The new law, "On Non-governmental, Non-commercial Organizations", offers an enabling environment for NGOs by easing registration and reporting requirements. However, the law must be implemented properly. ICNL, along with the drafters of the law, has planned to draft a manual on the new law outlining its various provisions and stressing the desired effect of these provisions. The manual will be a legislative reference guide used by both government officials and NGO representatives.

During this period, ICNL and its governmental partners began drafting the manual, but unfortunately, funding was a problem. Neither ICNL nor the partners could afford the publication costs. ICNL applied to OSI for assistance and OSI has agreed to fund this publication (due to be completed in January). The final product will be used in the above-mentioned training for the Ministry of Justice. Q 1/00

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#### **ICNL Seminar Series on New NGO Law Leads to More Training for Ministry Officials**

ICNL and Counterpart carried out a training series for NGOs and government officials in the implementation of the new NGO law. This training was funded by Global Training and Development and held in four different cities (Samarkand, Bukhara, Nukus and Kokand). Although these trainings were a success, it became abundantly clear that officials from the Ministry of Justice (being those that must implement the logistics of the new law) need special attention. The Ministry officials requested further ICNL assistance in the form of a specific training. This training will be executed by ICNL and its governmental partner, the Institute of Monitoring Legislation, and detail specific implementation issues for Ministry officials. Global has agreed to fund the tentative training for January in Tashkent. Dozens of Ministry officials will be brought in from the regions to take part in this critical training. Q 4/99

### **ICNL Receives Matching Funds to Create Legislative Manual on New NGO Law**

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During this period, ICNL and its governmental partners began drafting the manual, but unfortunately, funding was a problem. Neither ICNL nor the partners could afford the publication costs. ICNL applied to OSI for assistance and OSI has agreed to fund this publication (due to be completed in November). Q3/99

### **ICNL Also Receives Funding for Proposed Seminar Series on New NGO Law**

ICNL has also secured funding from USAID's Global Training and Development to carry out a seminar series utilizing the above-mentioned manual. The seminars will introduce NGOs and government officials to the new law and aide in the law's implementation. Q3/99

### **Uzbekistan Adopts New Law on NGOs**

After three years of consistent efforts by government officials, local NGOs, and international organizations, the new law On Non-governmental, Non-commercial Organizations of Uzbekistan was adopted by Olyi Majlis on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999. ICNL played a primary role in this success by raising the issue of new legislation and gaining NGO and government support. ICNL worked directly on the actual law with the drafters, NGOs and the Parliamentary Committee on Legislation. In cooperation with Counterpart and UNDP, ICNL moderated many broad discussions of the draft by NGOs throughout the country and insured that the drafters and parliamentarians will consider NGO comments. In the end, many NGO's recommendations were incorporated into the law.

If implemented properly, the new law On Non-governmental, Non-commercial Organizations of Uzbekistan will markedly improve the legal and regulatory environment for NGOs in Uzbekistan. See more in Objectives 1 and 3. Q 2/99

### **New NGO Law Meeting International Standards Awaits Adoption in Uzbekistan**

After an intense campaign, a new NGO bill was introduced into December's parliamentary session. In late December, that NGO law went through the first reading in the Parliament. It is expected that this draft will be adopted while going through the second reading in April 1999.

Through ICNL and Counterpart's efforts, a broad discussion of the draft law by NGOs has been initiated, including open debate on NGO concerns and recommendations, which reached the drafting group and the Parliamentary Committee on Legislation, and were taken into account in the final draft. The high-profile events, like conferences in the Parliament gained much attention and were effective platforms for ICNL to promote these recommendations. Q 1/99

#### **ICNL NIS Regional Director Visits Uzbekistan to Meet with Working Group**

ICNL brought its NIS Regional Director to Uzbekistan where she met with those working on the new NGO law. This group consists of Deputy Saidov, Deputy Tursunov and other representatives. ICNL offered comments to the draft law. ICNL also presented the drafters with additional materials regarding NGO legislation for comparative analysis. These drafters finished a final draft law for Parliamentary consideration in early November. This draft law was passed by Parliament in December. Q 4/98

#### **Government recognizes NGO Law Reform Efforts**

The need for NGO law reform in Uzbekistan was apparent to many of those involved in NGO activity in Uzbekistan. Many international organizations and NGOs held separate initiatives. ICNL and Counterpart were successful in unifying these diversified efforts and culminating the groups into one voice. Counterpart, GTD/USAID and ICNL concluded a series of six regional seminars in Uzbekistan, *"NGOs and Their Role in the Development of Civil Society"*. The last of these meetings was held in Parliament itself. The seminars brought together; local and national government leaders; NGO representatives from around the country; and the international organizations (including direct involvement from ABA, UNHCR, UNDP, Soros, World Bank).

Specifically, the unified effort led to the creation of a legislative working group. But overall, the efforts brought national focus to the NGO legislation. In August, the Parliament officially approved work on NGO legislation. And in September, President Karimov of Uzbekistan, made a national address where he called upon the Parliament to write a new NGO law. He further stated that Uzbekistan should strive to promote overall NGO development. Thus, the working group is ready to begin actual work and expects to have a project law drafted by January. Q 3/98